WORDSWORTH
AND
TOLSTOI
AND OTHER PAPERS

BY

A. M. B. GUTHRIE

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To Mrs Adamson
with kind regards
from
P. A. Guthrie.

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WORDSWORTH AND TOLSTOI

AND OTHER PAPERS

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BY

ANNA M. B. GUTHRIE

WITH PREFACE BY

H. J. C. GRIERSON

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The Author of the following Papers, Anna Maria Bruce Guthrie, was the youngest daughter of the late Rev. Thomas Daniel Wingate, Minister of Stromness, Orkney, and Elizabeth Helen, daughter of John Bruce of Sumburgh, Shetland.

She studied Art at the Royal Academy, London, and as an artist exhibited in London and other centres, including the Royal Scottish Academy. In 1904 she married Patrick Alexander Guthrie, and lived at Colinton, Edinburgh. She died on 28th March 1921.

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PREFACE

When the present writer was lecturing to soldiers on active service in France, in the early months of that cold and cruel year 1917, he found himself at the end of a short address on ballads, ancient and modern, speaking to a small group of soldiers from among his audience. One quiet-looking little man said to me, 'Ah! sir, you did not quote (I had been reading from the *Ancient Mariner*):

> "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure-dome decree:
> Where Alph, the sacred river, ran,
> Through caverns measureless to man,
> Down to a sunless sea."

I think those the most musical lines in the English language'; and he went on to quote so many other lines, with all the gusto of a lover, that I realised I had had at least one listener who was as familiar with the best English poetry as myself, and I said so. 'Poetry,' he replied, 'is one of the things you suddenly discover you like.' 'And what are you, I said, in civil life—a teacher?' 'No; a baker.' This was not the first time I thus stumbled on that rare, and often lonely, person, whom the spread of education has made possible in every rank of life—it has not done more. It has not made him common—the

real and passionate lover of poetry, the person for whom poetry is not a recreation, a taste, but, I might say without exaggeration, the central experience of life. One such, the finest judge of poetry I have known, was a telegraph clerk; another a well-born lady whose lot was cast in a county set given to hunting by day and bridge by night, where to mention a poet was to incur the fatal suspicion of being eccentric or 'highbrow.'

The writer of the following essays was one of that small class. Mrs. Guthrie was an artist and loved her art, but a love of poetry was the deepest source of her inspiration as an artist, and I have sometimes thought that, if circumstances had so shaped themselves, perhaps if she had been born a little later and entered the University when she became a pupil of the Academy, she might have achieved greater success with her pen than with her pencil. As it is, she never took up the pen till almost the end, the too early end, of her life. All the papers contained in this volume were composed since 1916. They reveal to my mind a very fine and sure insight, a very remarkable gift of delicate and rhythmical expression.

Mrs. Guthrie's taste in literature was cultivated neither by the academic training which secures an acquaintance with, if not always an appreciation of, the classics in English literature, a knowledge of the accepted views; nor, on the other hand, by that

intercourse with younger literary people which makes for familiarity with modern literature, a knowledge of the quickly changing fashions in taste, the approved smart thing to say, in depreciation or appreciation, of Tennyson, it may be, and the Victorians or of Rupert Brooke and the Georgians. Her tastes were her own; the poets she loved she had found for herself. The classics were not 'classics' for her—authors admired but little read. They were the most intimate companions of her mind, its ever consciously present inmates. She grew up in the enthusiasm in which we have all participated for the greater romantics, Keats and Shelley and Wordsworth, and never lost her enthusiasm. She shared with her generation a more tempered admiration for the finished art of Tennyson and the intellectual and emotional agility, the generous ardours of Browning. But her literary Bible was constituted by the Book of Job in the Authorised Version (I often pressed her to re-read it in the more intelligible Revised Version with the late Canon Driver's comment, but the rhythm of the Authorised was too intimately familiar and dear to her); the tragedies and sonnets of Shakespeare; the poems, both the lesser pieces and the great epics and tragedy, of Milton.

The depth of her love for Milton's poetry, all Milton's poetry, was to me the proof of her love for poetry in its entire purity, making no other appeal than that of its wonderful art, if her final preference of

Shakespeare and the Book of Job was a guarantee that she was far from indifferent to the human and spiritual appeal of the greatest poetry. The richness and depth of her human interests, her love of life and character, unrestrained by social or moral conventions, could hardly let it be otherwise. But Milton even more than Spenser is becoming the poet's poet, the test in his work from *Lycidas* onwards of a reader's power of delighting in poetry simply for its own sake. Johnson is not the only person who has disliked *Lycidas* and discovered that *Paradise Lost* was a work which one laid down and too often forgot to take up again. Spenser may bore you if you do not love poetry pure and simple; but Milton can repel you. Many besides Landor are averse to 'everything relating to theology and especially the view of it thrown open by this poem.' Milton's justification of God's ways to men fails utterly because it lacks the atmosphere that in Dante reconciles us to the *Inferno* as in some mysterious way the work of the same spirit of love as glows in the *Paradiso*. We can all feel that. It is not every one who can say with Landor also, and despite Milton's failure, 'After I have been reading *Paradise Lost* I can take up no other poet with satisfaction . . . I recur to it incessantly as the noblest specimen in the world of eloquence, harmony, and genius.' 'This art,' as another fine critic has said, 'is barren of all forms of vulgar appeal. There are few simply human, there are no sentimental graces. Tenderness

and romance, sweetness, pity, the child's heart, the social sympathies and affections—it deals in none of these. It is wrought in some incalculable fashion from materials overlooked by the other poets, a fabric which owes its strength and sublimity to exact relations, the science of spaces, the proportion of parts, to the formal laws which like those of the mathematics govern the constitution of the world.' Mrs. Guthrie was one of those who felt with Landor, who had but to open Milton at any place to feel at once the incantation of his high and beautiful diction, the music as of the spheres of his great cadences, the thrilling impression of that proud, passionate, rebellious, austere and majestic spirit.

This same unerring instinct for the essential in poetry dictated Mrs. Guthrie's choice of a favourite among the modern poets. Her interest in these was mainly the result of her becoming a member of the Edinburgh Branch of the English Association which, under the presidency of Mr. J. C. Smith, made the reading and discussion of the young Georgians its principal task for one or two winters. Her feeling about them was a somewhat puzzled one. She respected and admired their talent, their sincerity of feeling and purity of language, but, like the present writer, she found their poetry a somewhat mild beverage—despite occasional contortions of emotion and style—their poems as gathered in Georgian anthologies difficult to distinguish from one another.

One lays them down and forgets to take them up again. But one of Professor Blyth Webster's brilliant and infectious lectures on Robert Bridges led her to a fresh study of the Poet Laureate's lyrics, and they became one of her abiding possessions. Robert Bridges and William Butler Yeats were the only poets of to-day who gained a secure place beside her older favourites—and they are both poets' poets, especially Mr. Bridges. The passion, the love of love and beauty, which flows through the delicate and subtle rhythms of Mr. Yeats' lyrics must appeal to many; but Mr. Bridges' poetry has few adventitious charms of subject or sentiment. It is not passionate; it is not charged with original thought; it is no vehicle for propaganda or melodramatic story or vivid description. It was only too easy for Mr. Elroy Flecker to sneer at 'impeccable technique and extreme dullness and dearth of ideas' when he was eulogising John Davidson and A. E. Houseman, for to appreciate Mr. Bridges' poetry one must not ask from poetry ideas, or criticism of life, or sentiment, for their own sake, but be content with poetry, a deep and sincere love of beauty expressing itself with perfect sincerity and fitness. Mr. Bridges has written some of the purest poetry in our language, poems in which all other sentiments have been merged in the intuition of beauty as all the colours of the spectroscope are merged in the purity of whiteness, poems as beautiful as 'the lilies of the field.'

It was at my suggestion that Mrs. Guthrie made her first attempt to write and express to others some of her fine and discriminating but intense love of literature, especially poetry. The Edinburgh Branch of the English Association arranged in 1916-17 a series of lectures on English and foreign authors who seemed to us to suggest interesting and fruitful comparisons; and to this course Mrs. Guthrie contributed the essay on Wordsworth and Tolstoi. It was written to be read, and one seems still to hear in the simple, rhythmical cadence of the sentences the beautiful and sympathetic voice in which she read poetry, reading in which the emotion and rhythm were made dominant without exaggeration. She had read little or no criticism. The thoughts she expresses are the sincere record of the feelings with which she re-read authors whom she already knew intimately. She loved Tolstoi and Wordsworth because they expressed so much of what lay near her own heart, her deep love of nature—the wild, desolate scenery of the Shetland Isles:

> 'Where the Atlantic ocean in vast whirls
> Boils round the naked, melancholy isles
> Of farthest Thule——';

her love of Humanity, for which her sympathy was unconfined by either social or moral snobbery, so long as the genuine article was there, not smothered in the swathing of respectability and self-righteousness. Her essay is no elaborate analysis, but it seems to

me to indicate just the right things. In Wordsworth, she sees, nature comes first, man next and always man rather than men: 'the "still, sad music of humanity," touched him far more than any individual cry.' With Tolstoi it is quite the other way. His interest is dramatic and, despite his denunciation of the upper classes, it is their characters, their emotion he can best delineate. He sees nature clearest, feels her most intensely when she comes with a healing sense of contrast and relief to the excited or jaded nerves of a Nekhludoff or a Prince Andrei. Nothing could be happier than the contrast Mrs. Guthrie has indicated in pp. 4-6 between Tolstoi's fevered sense of nature's purity and beauty and the calmer, at heart more profoundly passionate, sense which Wordsworth utters of nature's quickening touch. It is the difference between the English child of an ordered nature and a tradition of pietism and the great Russian aristocrat lifting his head from the miasmas of an artificial and decaying civilisation, a religion divorced from ethics, to breathe the purer atmosphere of a more primitive nature, a more primitive peasantry than Wordsworth's Grasmere hills and Cumberland statesmen.

The second essay was written for a similar series of papers on love and women in different English authors—Chaucer, Milton and Shakespeare, Meredith, Hardy, Browning. Here she approaches Milton from another side than that touched on above, not

merely the great poetic artist, the 'mighty mouthed inventor of harmonies,' but Milton on his human side, that element in his work which to many readers is the least attractive; and Mrs. Guthrie's enthusiastic and beautiful appreciation of Eve is the most surprising thing in her paper. Here she divined the suppressed Milton, the passionate and ideal lover who had described in an early prose work the growth of his thought of 'the way of a man with a maid,' but in his first marriage had found only disillusionment, and had grown embittered. In drawing Eve, as in drawing Satan, Milton had revealed a divided mind. He had made Satan the hero of his poem and the object of his sternest denunciation. 'There is only one figure grander than Satan and that is Milton himself,' says a recent French critic: 'It is Milton and not God or the Son who, in analysing Satan, overthrows him. He exposes Satan, and with such passion that he forgets the natural enemies of Satan, God and the Messiah. He takes their place before the adversary. What need has he of a hero?' There is the same strange dualism in Milton's picture of Eve. He arraigns and scolds her and charges her with responsibility for the disaster, yet makes her the one lovable character in the poem; and her rival in our imagination is not poor Adam but Milton, the wounded heart that created her, the angry misogynist who wrote:

'With thee conversing I forget all time,'

and put into her mouth the wonderful speech:

> 'Forsake me not thus Adam, witness Heav'n
> What love sincere, and reverence in my heart
> I beare thee, and unweeting have offended
> Unhappilie deceiv'd.'

And over against this passionate but wounded and wrong-headed lover Mrs. Guthrie places the greatest lover in poetry, a greater perhaps than Dante, for if Dante followed love and Beatrice up to heaven and the presence of God, Shakespeare followed love to the hell of deception and wrong and was not disillusioned but found love still

> 'The star to every wandering bark
> Whose worth's unknown although his height be taken.'

Her analysis of Shakespeare's treatment of love and women seems to me singularly delicate and penetrating: 'The joy of loving is for the lover. His happiness is in giving: his triumph is in self-sacrifice.'

The short paper on Rhythm was written for the Outlook Club. It is an attempt to give expression to what lies at the root of all art and the love of art. I have said that to me Mrs. Guthrie seemed to be one of those people who love poetry in its entire purity. Such a love has its root probably in an unusually subtle sense of rhythm, something that goes far deeper than an enjoyment of the obvious delights of say Swinburne's verse, a sense of a rhythm in which thought and feeling and words are subtly and

perfectly blended. The very soul of poetry as of all the arts is rhythm. 'Coleridge remarks very pertinently somewhere,' says Carlyle, 'that whenever you find a sentence musically worded, of true rhythm and melody in the words, there is something deep and good in the meaning too. For body and soul, word and idea, go strangely together here as everywhere. Song: we said before it was the heroic of speech. All *old* Poems, Homer's and the rest, are authentically songs. I would say, in strictness, that all right Poems are; that whatsoever is not *sung* is properly no Poem but a piece of Prose cramped into jingling lines—to the great injury of the grammar, to the great grief of the reader, for the most part. It is only when the heart of a man is rapt into a true passion of melody, and the very tones of him, according to Coleridge's remark, become musical by the greatness, depth, and music of his thoughts, that we can give him right to rhyme and sing; that we call him a Poet, and listen to him as the Heroic of Speakers—whose speech *is* Song.' Mrs. Guthrie suggests in this paper that *all* that speaks to us as beauty, in nature and art, *is* Song.

And she has caught some of that essential spirit of Song in her tentative and delicate essays. Of the last two I will say nothing. They are endeavours to draw from nature and from life as in the critical essays she had drawn from her experience of the great poets. They resemble delicate pencil-sketches

—some of her own drawings—clear and pure in outline and with a beautiful unobtrusive rhythm in their simple, felicitously worded sentences. Indeed this seems to me the charm of all these essays, that has made it more than worth while to print them, now that the venture in a new art which Mrs. Guthrie had begun can, alas! be carried no further. They are delicate drawings of authentic impressions—free from all rhetoric yet as sure of touch as they are simple and unpretentious—and so, even if they should say what others have said before, they bear none the less the imprint of originality, of a delicate yet passionately sensitive mind, a rich and generous nature. To the last essay circumstances have given an additional poignancy. 'Spring was in the air; and she was going home a new creature.' It was not to be so. 'For the grave cannot praise thee. Death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee.' But deep in her soul the writer of these pages knew that life and death are both notes in one great rhythm, though the meaning of death no living creature may tell:

'Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea?
Or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?
Have the gates of death been opened unto thee?
Or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?'

H. J. C. GRIERSON.

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WORDSWORTH AND TOLSTOI

This paper is an attempt to show a certain similarity, which underlies the great difference, between Tolstoi and Wordsworth.

Wordsworth is essentially English: our poet, not the World's. Tolstoi is not Russia's, but the World's. Wordsworth stands alone in his lofty aloofness. He has no intimacy in him, no sense of humour. Tolstoi is intimate with everything, full of the milk of human kindness. Very different characters, yet their ideas on man, on nature, and on human life, are in many respects wonderfully alike!

Their ideas on man are a return to the simple life: 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' They see the poor man, rich in faith: the rich man, poor in spiritual things, because of his great possessions.

Their ideas on nature are that she is a necessity, and that no dignified worthy human life can be lived without communion with her.

Their ideas on human life are, that religion is a necessity: that there is a subtle bond which links the whole creation together, 'Through all the mighty commonwealth of things up from the creeping plant to sovereign man,' that what matters is not the

accidental, ephemeral individuality which is ours, but that part of the universal which is in each of us, drawing the individual nearer to the life of the kind: a linking him with eternity and infinity.

Thus, in Wordsworth, you find such phrases as: 'the general heart of man,' 'the universal heart,' and, in Tolstoi, the meaning of life as part of a whole.

Wordsworth called himself—latterly at any rate—an orthodox Christian, but his religion is a religion of beauty. His revelation is not a theological revelation, but a passionate intuition. Tolstoi was opposed to orthodoxy, and found that the pillars of the Church were the great enemies of true Christianity. He made for himself a Christianity, independent of the Church, founded on the literal interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount.

'To live after God's word, man must renounce all the pleasures of life: labour, be humble, endure and be charitable to all men.'

While both are lovers of nature and never without the consciousness of her presence, in Tolstoi, nature is always subordinate to man: in Wordsworth, man is subordinate to nature. To Tolstoi, nature is the whole creation groaning and travailing together: to Wordsworth, she is the living garment of God. Tolstoi is a painter of figure subjects, with a landscape background: Wordsworth, a landscape painter, who introduces figures. They both are charming:

one has the charm of vision; the other, the charm of a faithful love of truth.

Thus their earliest memories of nature differ according to their individuality.

Tolstoi says:

'Nature, up to the age of five, did not exist for me. All that I remember happened in bed or in our room. Neither grass, nor leaves, nor sky, nor sun existed for me. It cannot be that no one ever gave me flowers and leaves to play with: that I never saw any grass: that they never shaded me from the sun; but, up to the time when I was five or six years old, I have no recollection of what we call nature. Probably to see it, one has to be separate from it, and I was nature.'

If we are to believe Wordsworth, he never 'was nature' in this sense. To him, remotest infancy is a 'visible scene on which the sun is shining.' Even as a dignified baby, he reverenced beauty.

'Was it for this
That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
And, from his alder shades and rocky falls,
And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
That flowed along my dreams? For this, didst thou,
O Derwent! winding among grassy holms
Where I was looking on, a babe in arms,
Make ceaseless music that composed my thoughts
To more than infant softness, giving me
Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind
A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
That Nature breathes among the hills and groves.'

Tolstoi observes the moods of nature, to connect them with man's passion: Wordsworth, for nature's own sake. Tolstoi's attitude to nature, as to man, is intimate: Wordsworth's reverential. Tolstoi seeks nature's sympathy for his moods: Wordsworth brings with him a 'heart that watches and receives.'

In times of intense emotion, in moments of excitement, Tolstoi's characters see nature as they never did in calmer moods. It is when Prince Andrei is wounded on the battlefield that he first realises the lofty sky.

'He opened his eyes, hoping to see how the struggle of the French soldiers with the artilleryman was ending, and eager to know whether the red-haired artilleryman was killed or not, whether the cannons had been taken or saved. But he saw nothing but the sky—the lofty sky, not clear but still immeasurably lofty, with grey clouds creeping quietly over it. How quietly, peacefully, and triumphantly—not like us, running and shouting and fighting, not like the Frenchmen with frightened and frantic faces—how differently are these clouds creeping over that lofty, limitless sky. How was it I did not see that sky before? Yes, all is vanity, all is a cheat, except that infinite sky. But even that is not, there is nothing but peace and stillness, thank God.'

When Pierre is a prisoner, almost starving, daily surrounded by horrors, he realises for the first time the heritage that is man's: the moon, the forest, the fields, the boundless distance, and the twinkling stars.

'All that is in me, and all that is I,' thought Pierre,

'and all this they caught and shut up in a shed closed in with boards.'

When Prince Nekhludoff hears the ice breaking upon the river, he hears it as the warning voice of nature crying out upon the shattering and the rending, and the breaking of things cold, chaste and pure, to the sum of which the deed he contemplates is about to be added.

'It was dark, damp, and warm, out of doors, and that white spring mist which drives away the last snow or is diffused by the thawing of the last snow, filled the air. From the river under the hill, about a hundred steps from the front door, came a strange sound. It was the ice breaking. He stood and looked at her, involuntarily listening to the beating of his own heart, and the strange sounds from the river. There, on the river, beneath the white mist, the unceasing labour went on; and sounds as of something sobbing, cracking, dropping, being shattered to pieces, mixed with the tinkling of the thin bits of ice as they broke against each other like glass.'

When she left him, trembling and silent, giving no answer to his words, he again went out into the porch:

'From the river below the creaking and tinkling and sobbing of the breaking ice came still louder, and a gurgling sound could now also be heard. The mist had begun to sink, and from above it, the waning moon dimly lighted up something black and weird.'

These examples from Tolstoi are true, I should think, to the experience of most people. We notice

nature in moments of emotion and excitement, when our faculties are keen, and forget her amidst the cares of this world. We seek her sympathy for our moods. We make her sympathise with us. We do not sympathise with her.

It is the exact opposite with Wordsworth. With humbleness of heart, he watches nature, and she inspires his thought: 'From nature doth emotion come and moods of calmness equally are nature's gift.' He does not feel her influence most in moments of excitement, perhaps because he is never excited. If he has moments of intense emotion, nature is the cause of that emotion, not the accompaniment.

'The sun was set, or setting, when I left
Our cottage door, and evening soon brought on
A sober hour, not winning or serene,
For cold and raw the air was, and untuned:
But as a face we love is sweetest then
When sorrow damps it, or, whatever look
It chance to wear, is sweetest if the heart
Have fulness in herself; even so with me
It fared that evening. Gently did my soul
Put off her veil, and, self-transmuted, stood
Naked, as in the presence of her God.
While on I walked, a comfort seemed to touch
A heart that had not been disconsolate:
Strength came where weakness was not known to be,
At least not felt; and restoration came
Like an intruder knocking at the door
Of unacknowledged weariness.'

To Wordsworth, nature's tragedies are sufficient

in themselves without a human interest. He also, like Prince Nekhludoff, hears the cry of splitting ice, but it does not come to him as an eerie repetition of his crime. It disturbs and troubles him in the midst of his games :

> 'Meanwhile abroad
> Incessant rain was falling, or the frost
> Raged bitterly, with keen and silent tooth ;
> And, interrupting oft that eager game,
> From under Esthwaite's splitting fields of ice
> The pent-up air, struggling to free itself,
> Gave out to meadow grounds and hills a loud
> Protracted yelling, like the noise of wolves
> Howling in troops along the Bothnic Main.'

Wordsworth's descriptions pass on to you the emotion in the poet's mind, not the characteristics of the place described. They have the charm of visionary things, the reality of dreams. Something is added, which makes the place described not a place on earth. This spiritual dream-like quality is very evident in the following passage :

> 'Then, reascending the bare common, saw
> A naked pool that lay beneath the hills,
> The beacon on the summit, and, more near,
> A girl, who bore a pitcher on her head,
> And seemed with difficult steps to force her way
> Against the blowing wind. It was, in truth,
> An ordinary sight ; but I should need
> Colours and words that are unknown to man
> To paint the visionary dreariness
> Which, while I looked all round for my lost guide,

Invested moorland waste and naked pool,
The beacon crowning the lone eminence,
The female and her garments vexed and tossed
By the strong wind.'

Tolstoi's descriptions, on the other hand, are marvellously realistic: so real that you do not feel as if you were reading about a place, but as if remembering one once seen. Take this for example:

'They drove at last into a birch forest that lay on both sides of the road. In the forest it was almost hot, the wind could not be felt. The birches all studded with sticky green leaves did not stir, and lilac-coloured flowers, and the first grass lifted the last year's leaves and peeped out green under them. Tiny fir trees, dotted here and there among the birches, brought jarring reminder of winter with their coarse unchanging green. The horses neighed as they entered the forest and were visibly heated. Pyotr, the footman, said something to the coachman; the coachman assented, but apparently the coachman's sympathy was not enough for Pyotr. He turned round on the box to his master.

'"Your Excellency, how soft it is," he said, smiling respectfully.

'"Eh!"

'"It is soft, your Excellency."

'"What does he mean?" wondered Prince Andrei. "Oh, the weather most likely," he thought, looking from side to side. "And indeed everything is green already. How soon!"'

Tolstoi speaks of his debt to nature as he feels it.

'It is good to have a friend; but he may die, or go away, or one may not be able to keep pace with him, but

nature, to which one is wedded by a notarial deed, or to which one has been born by inheritance, is still better. She is cold, obdurate, disdainful, exacting, but she is a friend one does not lose till death, and even then one will be absorbed into her. But for the consciousness that she is there, and that if I stumble she is at hand to hold on to, life would be a sad business.'

In his own stately manner, like himself, Wordsworth tells what he owes to nature :

> 'If, in this time
> Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
> Despair not of our nature, but retain
> A more than Roman confidence, a faith
> That fails not, in all sorrow my support,
> The blessing of my life—the gift is yours
> Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed
> My lofty speculations; and in thee,
> For this uneasy heart of ours, I find
> A never failing principle of joy
> And purest passion.'

Tolstoi's friend, cold, obdurate, disdainful, is somewhat characteristically different from Wordsworth's 'never-failing principle of joy and purest passion,' but both mean the same in the end, 'how exquisitely the external world is fitted to the mind,' and that intercourse with nature is necessary to man.

Granted that nature is necessary to man, what class of men live nearest to nature? The answer is the working-classes, the outdoor labourers of Westmoreland, the Russian peasant. In Tolstoi's arraignment of his own class, the first point against the rich

is their separation from nature. They look on landscapes through curtained windows, or rolling along in carriages. They have no idea how animals live and grow. They have never tended cows or lived under the same roof with pigs and hens. They satisfy their need of animals by keeping a canary in a cage, or a pampered dog, and even these pets they hand over to the care of servants. Thus they live a stunted life : the poor narrow life of the individual cut off from the wide, free, rich life given by nature to man, to animals, and plants.

The first book, in which Tolstoi deals with the inferiority of the rich and cultured to primitive man, is *The Cossacks,* and here, what is insisted on is that the rich are at a disadvantage because of their want of simplicity, and separation from nature. It has quite a Wordsworthian touch. Man appears, as he does to Wordsworth, as a part of nature, the centre of that magnificent landscape, a strange and majestic object of external nature. But here the parallel ends. It is not the holy nature which Wordsworth venerates. Amidst this free, light-hearted world, there is no talk of resignation and no need of faith. Happiness is to be with nature, to see her, to hold converse with her.

'God made everything for man's enjoyment. There is no sin in anything.'

'Each day before me the snowy mountains and this majestic woman. She is light-hearted : she is like nature.

She is calm, tranquil, sufficient to herself; but I, an incomplete feeble creature, wish her to understand my ugliness and my anguish. Perhaps in her I love nature, the personification of all that is beautiful in nature, but I have lost my power of will, and I am become the instrument by which she is loved by the elemental power, by the universe of God.'

The Cossacks' union with nature makes Olyenin, the Russian noble, feel his life, by contrast, poor and artificial. This is how he writes about it to a friend:

'You ought once to experience life in all its artless beauty. You ought to see and realise what I have each day before my eyes—the eternal, inaccessible snow of the mountains, and a majestic woman endowed with the primitive beauty in which the first woman must have come from the Hand of the Creator. The moment that, instead of my cottage, my forest, and my love, there come up before my imagination your parlours, your ladies with pomaded locks, I am pained at the thought of those vacuous faces, those rich, marriageable girls whose faces seem to say, "No matter: come if you wish, though I am a rich maiden," those rules and regulations, and finally that everlasting ennui bred in the bone.'

One closes the book with a mind filled with beautiful images of snowy mountains, of superb women, of light-hearted brigands, and dense luxuriant vegetation.

Wordsworth sees a very different nature from that in which the Cossacks were happy. An immoral universe to him would be unthinkable. Nature to him is always edifying. His is a world where

'holy nature seems to cradle on her bosom, a loving, wise, august, simple humanity.' He sees man first of all as a distant object, lost in the immensity of nature: not so much a person, as a strange visionary impression of humanity invested with nature's mystery, and giving in return an added mystery to nature.

'A rambling schoolboy, thus,
I felt his presence in his own domain,
As of a lord and master, or a power,
Or genius, under Nature, under God,
Presiding; and severest solitude
Had more commanding looks when he was there.
When up the lonely brooks on rainy days
Angling I went, or trod the trackless hills
By mists bewildered, suddenly mine eyes
Have glanced upon him distant a few steps,
In size a giant, stalking through thick fog,
His sheep like Greenland bears; or, as he stepped
Beyond the boundary line of some hill-shadow
His form hath flashed upon me, glorified
By the deep radiance of the setting sun.'

Loving this distant impression of humanity first for the fields' and hills' sake—on a nearer view, realising that this distant object is a person, a man and a brother, he is struck with tender solicitude, a 'pity beyond all telling' for the helplessness of man.

'Immense
Is the recess, the circumambient world
Magnificent, by which they are embraced:
They move about upon the soft green turf;
How little they, they and their doings, seem,

> And all that they can further or obstruct!
> Through utter weakness, pitiably dear,
> As tender infants are.'

Afterwards, he grew to look with a 'due reverence on earth's rightful lord, here placed to be the inheritor of heaven,' but this reverence was cultivated, not spontaneous. In much of his work, the weakness and imperfection of man sets off the strength and perfection of nature. Man is grand in Wordsworth when nature imparts to him her grandeur. He is mysterious, when she throws over him her cloak of mystery. But, viewed by himself, it is his humility, his weakness, his commonplaceness, which endears him to the poet. Wordsworth loved, as nature loves, the lonely poor. He loved them for the grandeur of which they were unconsciously a part, and then he hardly thinks of them as human beings, but when he brings them down from vision, from 'height and cold and splendour of the hills' to be real dwellers in the valley, he loves them for the very contrast that their weakness makes to nature's strength, their humility to nature's pride, for the relief of finding something finite to cling to amidst the vastness and rapture of his vision. As the ancient prophets 'borne aloft in vision, yet constrained to take with them a troubled human heart,' when beauty would carry him away as with a flood, he holds to thoughts of the quiet humble folk he knew—thoughts, which bring him back from ecstasy to this workaday world.

As the children of Israel could not bear the shining face of Moses, the man who had looked on God without a veil, so the glory of nature is toned down and made bearable to Wordsworth by the presence of man.

> 'While my eye
> Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,
> The echo of the voice enwrought
> A human sweetness with the thought
> Of travelling through the world that lay
> Before me in my endless way.'

After the Solitary had seen the vision of the sky-city :

> 'Glory beyond all glory ever seen
> By waking sense or by the dreaming soul!
> . . . Forms uncouth of mightiest power
> For admiration and mysterious awe,'

he remembers with relief :

> 'This little Vale, a dwelling-place of Man,
> Lay low beneath my feet; 'twas visible—
> I saw not, but I felt that it was there.
> That which I *saw* was the revealed abode
> Of Spirits in beatitude.'

Having first looked at man through objects that were great and fair : first communed with him by their help, Wordsworth never willingly dwells on vice or crime. We can well believe that he is not 'one who much or oft delights to season his fireside with personal talk.' Mankind for him is the species, not the individual. He had great sympathy with the thing as a whole, but not with separate parts. In life,

as in art, his aim is to get rid of insincerity and come back to nature. For this reason, he prefers the poor and humble, who have no use for superfluities. In his youth he passed through a stage of extreme enthusiasm for the French Revolution and for all the golden promises which that time held out. He was then disposed to believe that mankind could be regenerated from without, by Acts of Parliament, by sweeping social reforms. He did not so much recant these beliefs, as they just fell away from him, and he got to see clearly that Kingdom of Heaven which cometh not with observation.

Wordsworth is not interested in events, but in life; and he sees that one is most alive when least is happening, and that actions separate man from his soul in the same way as possessions. With Maeterlinck, he is 'well aware that the psychology of victory, or murder, is but elementary and exceptional, and that the solemn voice of men and things, the voice that issues forth so timidly and hesitatingly, cannot be heard amidst the uproar of acts of violence.' Of his Muse, he says:

> 'Meek aspirations please her, lone endeavour,
> And sage content, and placid melancholy;
> She loves to gaze upon a crystal river—
> Diaphanous because it travels slowly;
> Soft is the music that would charm for ever;
> The flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly.'

The grandeur of suffering humanity appealed to

Wordsworth. He felt that pain is more than compensated for by the dignity of character, the fortitude and resignation which it can produce. The snowy peaks attained by suffering are purer, nearer the stars, than the grassy hills of joy. Yet joy also has its mysteries : moments when

> . . . 'We are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul :
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.'

This seeing into the life of things made him disregard what to most people seems essential, made him feel that virtue and the faculties within are vital, and that riches are 'akin to fear, to change, to cowardice and death.' If one is most alive when least is happening and actions separate man from his soul, culture, refinement, riches, possessions, separate man from man. The beggar drinking with his cronies is united to humanity : the king is lonely in the isolation of his throne.

Wordsworth therefore loves to dwell on the uneventful lives of the poor : lives which are so near to nature, so united to mankind, having so little in them from the external point of view but rich in opportunities of inward, spiritual life, of communion with beauty, old as creation. He is happier in dealing with men in the abstract, not with particular men, and the 'still sad music of humanity' touched

him far more than any individual cry. Thus, in the first book of 'The Excursion,' one does not feel—despite the simplicity of the Wanderer's tale—that one's sympathies are much touched by Margaret as a living woman. But, when Wordsworth, in a few touches, gathers as it were in his hand the essence of the world's sorrow depicted in this woman's share, then we feel sympathy none the less poignant because part of it is for ourselves :

> 'Yet still
> She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
> Have parted hence ; and still that length of road,
> And this rude bench, one torturing hope endeared,
> Fast rooted at her heart.
>
> 'I stood, and leaning o'er the garden wall
> Reviewed that Woman's sufferings ; and it seemed
> To comfort me while with a brother's love
> I blessed her in the impotence of grief.
> Then towards the cottage I returned ; and traced
> Fondly, though with an interest more mild,
> That secret spirit of humanity
> Which, 'mid the calm oblivious tendencies
> Of nature, 'mid her plants, and weeds, and flowers,
> And silent overgrowings, still survived.
>
> 'Beside yon spring I stood,
> And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel
> One sadness, they and I. For them a bond
> Of brotherhood is broken : time has been
> When, every day, the touch of human hand
> Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
> In mortal stillness ; and they ministered
> To human comfort.'

There is no woman now, only the fine essence of her soul that Wordsworth has caught for us in the costly urn of his art. I feel the same thing in 'Michael.' The individual Michael is nothing to you, but again you are made to feel the spiritual presence of his sorrow left as an abiding legacy to the spot where he suffered :

> 'Tis not forgotten yet
> The pity which was then in every heart
> For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
> That many and many a day he thither went,
> And never lifted up a single stone.
> There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
> Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
> Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
> . . . Yet the oak is left
> That grew beside their door; and the remains
> Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
> Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.'

The same power of getting beneath the crust of the individual to the universal is seen in 'Simon Lee.' The theme is trivial and the old man's gratitude seems absurd, till, in a flash, Wordsworth sweeps away 'Simon the individual' and shows us 'Simon the type,' standing for the pathetic, ever-enduring gratitude of mankind towards a universe in which the heaven is often brass over his head, and the earth iron beneath his feet :

> 'Alas! the gratitude of men
> Hath oftener left me mourning.'

The leech-gatherer, by his unrepining faith in God amid hardships which God ordained, reproving the poet who doubted amidst easy circumstances, is also a type of the wonderful uncomplaining fortitude of the poor :

> 'I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
> In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.'

Wordsworth does not forget that these types may each be for the purposes of kind :

> 'A man
> With the most common ; husband, father ; learned,
> Could teach, admonish ; suffered with the rest
> From vice and folly, wretchedness and fear.'

But this aspect of their lives does not interest him. It is the poor man, looked at from the point of view of the upper classes or the seer, not from his own point of view. Nevertheless, all Wordsworth's poems on humble life are lit up by a tender, if rather detached, sympathy with the ordinary quiet sorrows of ordinary lives.

> 'Whether we be young or old,
> Our destiny, our being's heart and home
> Is with infinitude, and only there ;
> With hope it is, hope that can never die,
> Effort, and expectation, and desire,
> And something ever more about to be.'

It is with infinitude that Wordsworth's great work has to do, going far beneath the surface into the depths of life, and showing us the great spiritual

forces by which we live, making us feel that nothing is common or unclean, that life is solemn, momentous, earnest, tragic if you like, but that beneath, above, beyond the tragedy—investing it with solemnity—there is always eternal beauty, transfiguring the whole. Loving, not so much man, as mankind, Wordsworth fulfils Tolstoi's ideal of love in himself, namely, that individual life has no separate meaning, only a meaning as part of a whole; and that love for the individual is a clog to the spirit, the ideal love being to love everything, every one. Tolstoi never attained this ideal. Wordsworth lived in it! I think a fundamental difference between them is that Tolstoi was always seeking that harmony with himself which Pierre saw so distinctly in the soldiers at Borodino, but which Tolstoi never attained, except for short intervals. Wordsworth lived in harmony with himself, except for a short period of storm, from childhood to old age. If ever man sought an ideal, that man was Tolstoi. If ever man found one, it was Wordsworth.

Wordsworth is not a teacher, but something infinitely greater, a seer. What we need is the unattainable. What we want to see is the invisible; and when souls, such as he, draw back the curtain and show us a glimpse of the beyond, we learn infinitely more from them than we do from pages and pages of moral injunctions. Still, what we learn is more in the nature of inspiration than definite

teaching; and what is valuable about his work is its indefinite side, his power of taking us above the world into a land of vision where he shows us goodness from the æsthetic, not the moral, point of view. In his most exalted moments, he shows us the beauty of holiness, not its righteousness, and thereby attracts us to it by a more powerful bond than we had known before. But when he comes down from this land of vision, and becomes a definite teacher of ordinary morals, he generally fails and often ceases to be a poet, his axioms leaving us cold. Thus, he has many pious theories about the benefits of poverty all through his poems, but they are theories, not intuitions, and we are left a little sceptical and half-inclined to agree with Mr. Shaw when he says we should leave it to the poor to say that poverty is a blessing!

We cannot dismiss Tolstoi thus. We are forced to listen to what he says, and are made very uncomfortable by so doing.

Tolstoi's best work was not written with a purpose; and he is happiest when describing people of his own class — the people whom he professes to despise. Man as an individual is Tolstoi's concern, in spite of his theories, and it is into individual characters that he has such subtle insight. He does not introduce us to symbols of humanity, types of patience, endurance, fortitude, but to men and women as they are, with all their imperfections. He had a wonderful power of understanding men, and he draws the poor man

with truth, power, and simplicity, but not with that intimate subtlety with which he delineates the rich.

Still, unlike Wordsworth, he is a great teacher in the ordinary sense, and, although his teaching is not the most artistic side of his work, it is perhaps the most interesting. Wordsworth tells us that the poor man is admirable and leaves it at that. We can admire him, and still go on our ordinary way of life undisturbed. Tolstoi will not leave us in peace. He tells us, not only that the poor man is admirable, but that we are despicable. He preaches poverty, not as a beautiful aspect of life, but as the only right way of living possible to mankind. Wordsworth is abstract: Tolstoi terribly, disconcertingly concrete. He believes in labour, not as something to be admired at a distance, but as something without which no worthy human life is possible. The belief in work is the kernel of his teaching. No idle person can be happy or deserves to be, and preferably we must labour with our hands. As the proverb says: 'Russia and summer do not go well together,' and Tolstoi's writings are full of tragedy and sin, sorrow and suffering, dirt, disease and the devil: things which Wordsworth either did not know of, or ignored. Wordsworth's tragedy is the inspiring tragedy of man's soul and the unknown. Tolstoi's tragedy is too often the sordid tragedy of man's body in conflict with his soul, of the lusts of the flesh, of hunger, and war, and prisons: man with his spiritual essence still

impure, still tainted, covered up and swamped by material things! He has not one trace of Wordsworth's serenity, but he is terribly alive.

Wordsworth shuns the evil which he cannot cure. Tolstoi is ever grappling with it, ever thinking he can find a cure. He acts for us, as Hamlet to the queen, and sets us up a glass where we may see ourselves, and, like that poor lady, our hearts are cleft in twain. Another Jonah, he cries to civilisation 'Yet forty days and Nineveh shall fall!' He is a pacific anarchist. He disapproves of all governments, institutions, and laws on which society is based. He would pull down the whole fabric and rebuild it nearer to the heart's desire. Tolstoi is a communist, but not in the same sense as Lenin. The present state of Russia is in every way opposed to his ideals. He would have a communism based on the brotherhood of man, in which there would be no bloodshed, no tyranny, no prisons, but each would work for the good of all. Whether his system would be practicable is a debatable question; but at any rate it has never been tried. It may be a counsel of perfection, but one would think the world had tried bloodshed and repression long enough, with miserable results; and the only hope for civilisation is that Tolstoi's ideas in some way may be found workable. They are, after all, only applied Christianity. Most of Europe calls itself 'Christian,' but has never thought of acting in a Christian manner.

Tolstoi believes crime is only increased by punishment, and he would abolish all our law courts and prisons :

'These people, not a whit more dangerous than many of those who remained free, were first locked up in prisons, then transported to Siberia, where they were provided for and kept for months and years of perfect idleness, away from nature, their families, and from useful work, *i.e.* away from the conditions necessary for a natural and moral life.

'But surely it cannot be so simple, thought Nekhludoff, and yet he saw with certainty, strange as it had seemed at first, that it was not only a theoretical but also a practical solution of the question. The usual objection, What is one to do with the evil-doers ? Surely not let them go unpunished ? no longer confused him. This objection might have a meaning if it were proved that punishment lessened crime, or improved the criminal ; but when the contrary is proved, and it is evident that it is not in people's power to correct each other, the only reasonable thing to do is to leave off doing the things which are not only useless, but harmful, immoral and cruel.

'For many centuries people, who were considered criminals, have been tortured. Well, and have they ceased to exist ? No, their numbers have been increased, both by the criminals corrupted by punishment, and also by those lawful criminals, the judges, procureurs, magistrates, and jailers, who judge and punish men. Nekhludoff now understood that society, and order in general, exist not because of these lawful criminals who judge and punish others, but because in spite of people being thus depraved, men still pity and love one another.

'Perhaps these governors, inspectors, policemen, are

needed, but it is terrible to see men deprived of the chief human attribute, that of love and sympathy for one another. The thing is, he continued, that these people consider lawful what is not lawful, and do not consider the eternal, immutable law, written in the hearts of men by God, as law. That is why I feel so depressed when I am with these people. I am simply afraid of them, and really they are terrible, more terrible than robbers. A robber might, after all, feel pity, but they can feel no pity: they are inured against pity as these stones are against vegetation.

'The answer he had been unable to find was the same that Christ gave to Peter. It was that we should forgive always, an infinite number of times, because there are no men who have not themselves sinned, and therefore no one can punish or correct others.'

Tolstoi is opposed to resistance by violence of any sort. If no one can punish or correct others, no nation should go to war on any pretext whatsoever, and Tolstoi is a great conscientious objector. Having himself been in the Russian Army and fought more than once, he can speak from personal experience.

'He beheld the frightful soul-stirring scenes: he beheld war, not from its conventional beautiful and brilliant side, with music and drum-beat, with its fluttering flags and galloping generals; but war, in its real phase, in blood, in suffering, in death.

'War! how terrible, people say, is war, with its wounds, bloodshed, and death. We must organise a Red Cross Society to alleviate the wounds, suffering and death. But truly, what is dreadful in war is not wounds, suffering, and death. The human race that has always suffered and died, should by this time be accustomed

to suffering. Without war, people die by famine, by inundations, by epidemics. It is not suffering and death that are terrible. It is that which allows people to inflict suffering and death which is terrible.

'And why do not Christian people who profess the one great law of love and self-sacrifice, when they behold what they have wrought, fall in repentance on their knees before Him who when He gave them life, implanted in the soul of each of them, together with a fear of death, a love of the good and beautiful, and with tears of joy embrace each other like brothers.

'Nature, beautiful and strong, breathed conciliation. Can it be that people have not room to live in this beautiful world, under this measureless starry heaven? Can feelings of enmity, vengeance, or lust to destroy one's fellow-beings retain their hold on man's soul amid this enchanting nature? All that is evil in man's heart should, one would think, vanish in contact with nature, this immediate expression of beauty and goodness.'

Tolstoi's attitude towards money and material possessions is equally uncompromising. He would have us all act like the man in his story who, when he found a heap of gold, ran away from it as if it were the devil. He does not believe money can do good, even if given in charity. The wealthy philanthropist gives, for the most part unwisely, money which has been unjustly acquired, and this is a form of self-indulgence with which Tolstoi has no sympathy. His practice and principle were all his life long at variance, and when he reluctantly resolved to sell his novel, *Resurrection,* and devote the proceeds to help the Doukobars to emigrate (a poor and persecuted

Russian sect who refused military service), he gave the money but thought he was doing wrong.

'I cannot get away from the conclusion. If I believed that money does good, I ought to alter my whole way of life and go back to money-making.'

Such are his theories about crime and punishment, about war, about money. We cannot answer him. What makes the sadness of our modern life is that we all feel its unfairness and inequalities. We have lost the old comfortable feeling that it is right that 'I should have everything and you have nothing.' While he blames us, Tolstoi knows our difficulties. The wrong is mixed, 'in tragic life, God wot, no villain need be'; and even when denouncing the evils of government, of every institution whereby man seeks to coerce his brother man, Tolstoi shows us to our surprise that the people who do these things are human after all. Take, for instance, the kind-hearted inspector in *Resurrection*:

'Most terrible of all seemed this sickly, elderly, kind-hearted inspector, obliged to part mother and daughter, father and son, people who were just the same sort of people as he and his own children.'

And Davoust in *War and Peace*, condemning men to death without a thought, suddenly becomes human when he looks at Pierre:

'Davoust lifted his eyes and looked intently at Pierre. For several seconds they looked at one another, and that

look saved Pierre. In that glance, apart from all circumstances of warfare and of judgment, human relations arose between these two men.'

Tolstoi feels that society has gone wrong because it supersedes these human relations by laws and discipline, and so commits crimes which would be impossible to the individual. Under no circumstance is it right to treat men without pity and without love, and that society does so is the crime of society. Tolstoi's remedy is that if we cannot reform society we can at least stop taking part in its crimes, we can give up being oppressors and become oppressed. We can stop being rich and become poor. We can renounce our pride and attain humility, and in doing so we shall find—here he and Wordsworth are entirely in agreement—that riches are a mistake, that labour is sweeter than ease, that 'wisdom is ofttimes nearer when we stoop than when we soar,' that the true life of mankind which matters is not the exotic life of the cultured and parasitic few, but the great simple childlike life of humanity, that the things we thought important really do not matter, and what matters are the things we overlooked :

'I know that I listened to speeches in the English Parliament, and they seemed to me dull and insignificant, but here are flies and dirt and Rashkir peasants, and I, watching them with intense respect and anxiety, became absorbed in listening to them and watching them, and felt it all to be important.'

Tolstoi tells in his confession how he got dissatisfied with his own class. He believes that four great needs of man are: a link with nature, the family, useful work, and a meaning for life. The rich have lost their link with nature. Their family life is destroyed by their giving the care of their children to nurses; and they are idle, or if they work, it is as rulers, and judges, and advocates, to keep up institutions which are the enemies of man's happiness and liberty: institutions which consider human relations unnecessary between human beings. How different is the work of the poor!

'"They worked," as he explained, "up to their knees in water from Sunrise to Sunset, with two hours for dinner. Then he told them how, for twenty-eight years, he went out to work and sent all his earnings home, first to his father, then to his eldest brother, and now to his nephew. On himself, he spent only two or three roubles of the fifty or sixty he earned a year, just for luxuries, tobacco, and matches. "I am a sinner: when tired, I even drink a little vodka sometimes," he added with a guilty smile. "Ah, no one sees how we work, but every one sees how we drink!"

'"Yes, this is quite a new and different world," thought Nekhludoff, feeling himself surrounded on all sides with new people, and the serious interests, joys, and sufferings of a life of labour.'

The fourth and great need of man is a meaning for life, and neither Tolstoi, nor the people he knew, found one; so he fell into despair. Then it occurred to him that the mass of mankind live as if life had a

meaning for them, and he began to study the poor. Among them, he finds 'the link with nature unbroken, family life entire, useful work the rule, and a meaning for life.'

'And I began to look well into the life and faith of these people, and the more I considered it, the more I became convinced that they have a real faith which is a necessity for them, and alone gives their life a meaning and makes it possible.

'In contrast to what I see in my own class, where the whole of life is passed in idleness and amusement, and dissatisfaction, I saw that the whole life of these people was passed in heavy labour, and that they were content with life. While we think it terrible that we have to suffer and die, these folk live and suffer and approach death with tranquillity and in most cases gladly. The life of our circle, of the rich and learned, not only became distasteful to me but lost all meaning, while the life of the whole labouring people of the whole of mankind who produce life appeared to me in its true light. I understood that that life is life itself, and I accepted it.'

In *War and Peace,* Pierre on the battlefield for the first time notices the common soldiers and is struck by their possessing something he has not got.

'"Thank God, that is all over," thought Pierre, covering his head up again. Oh, how awful terror is, and how shamefully I gave way to it. But they: they were firm and calm all the while to the end." They, in Pierre's mind, meant the soldiers: those who had been on the battery, and those who had given him food, and those who had prayed to the holy pictures. They—those strange people, of whom he had known nothing hitherto

—they stood out clearly and sharply in his mind apart from all other people.'

The problem which faces Pierre is how to get rid of what is superfluous in himself, which makes him inferior to the simplicity of the soldiers: all these little incongruous jarring complexities which make a cultured man. The hardest thing to achieve is unity with nature and with mankind in submission to God. Individuality and complexity are the enemies of this union. The more simple and childlike we are, the more at one we are with nature and the universe of God. Yet it is these same simple childlike people who, on the next page, form the bloodthirsty mob which tore the factory lad to pieces. After this, Pierre, still seeking spiritual enlightenment, meets with Platon Karataeff, that personification of 'everything Russian, kindly and round.'

'An unfathomable, rounded-off, and everlasting personification of the spirit of simplicity and truth. Every word, every action of his was the expression of a force, uncomprehended by him, which was his life. But his life, as he looked at it, had no meaning as a separate life. It had meaning only as part of a whole of which he was at all times conscious. His words, his actions, flowed from him as smoothly, as inevitably, and as spontaneously as the perfume rises from the flowers. The great charm of his talk was that the simplest incidents, sometimes the same that Pierre had himself seen without noticing them, gained a character of seemliness and solemn significance.'

Like the leech-gatherer, his talk was 'cheerfully uttered with demeanour kind, but stately in the main.'

'Attachments, friendship, love, as Pierre understood them, Platon had none, but he loved and lived on affectionate terms with every creature with whom he was thrown in life, and especially so with man, not with any particular man, but with the man who happened to be before his eyes.'

It was only after severe mental struggle, after years of doubt, that Prince Andrei, the rich man in *War and Peace*, got hold of the illuminating idea of love for all mankind, when he forgave his enemy; and it was only on his deathbed that he succeeded in detaching himself from the ties which bound him to individuals, and realised the meaning of life as part of a whole, as life was slipping from his grasp, and as at last, no longer circumscribed and fretted and hindered but in perfect freedom and calmness, the little narrow river of his life joined the wide ocean of Eternity. Thus prince and peasant travel the same road, but what Prince Andrei found difficult and took a lifetime to learn, Platon the peasant knows naturally without any effort. It is as simple to him as the air he breathes.

When a prisoner in the midst of hardship and privation, Pierre, talking to Platon, finds his soul: he begins to get a glimmering of that harmony with himself which had struck him in the soldiers. He

sees in Platon a force of life independent of circumstances not reached by the intellect but by a faculty which comes into force when the intellect is in abeyance, and which the rich and cultured have lost, as they have lost that sense of direction by which a savage finds his way home through an unknown country. He found that unhappiness is due, not to lack of what is needful but to superfluity.

Tolstoi praises the life of the poor, but he is also keenly conscious of the injustice of society to the poor.

'And then he suddenly remembered the prison, the shaven heads, the cells, the disgusting smells, the chains, and by the side of it all the madly lavish city of the rich, himself included.'

This question often put itself to him :

'Is it necessary that the peasant should work to the very limits of his strength and never have sufficient to eat, while we are living in the greatest luxury ?'

He cannot, like Wordsworth, live in transcendent peace, his eye fixed upon the good alone. He is a born reformer and is always trying to make things better. His theories are always interesting, but not always convincing. One point on which he often insists is that the poor face death in a much more resigned and courageous manner than the rich ; but in his concrete instances of this, very often the awful callousness of the poor is brought out more than his dignity or resignation. Thus in the three

deaths, you have the consumptive dying on the stove, amidst people entirely indifferent to his suffering, absolutely unmoved by the approach of the great mystery—the cook, who is annoyed by his cough, and the driver, who boldly asks him for his boots, on the plea that he will not need them any more. These do not seem to us any higher types of humanity than the great lady who is afraid of death, and the husband who, instead of being sorry for her, dislikes being near her because she reminds him that he too must die—with all the retinue of unwilling servants and perfunctory doctors. The great lady is selfish and exacting, and the poor man is afraid of being a trouble; but the poor man is absolutely indifferent to death, and the great lady is afraid. Surely fear is better than indifference? The only one of the three deaths which approaches any dignity is that of the tree, and this is perhaps because there is nothing repulsive in the death of a tree. We do not feel standing beside a felled tree which will grow no more, what Princess Mary felt at her father's deathbed:

'Instantaneously all the tenderness she had been feeling vanished, and was followed by a feeling of horror for what lay before her. He is no more, and here in the place where he was, is something unfamiliar and sinister, some fearful, terrifying, and repulsive secret.'

The fear of death seems to have been ever present with Tolstoi, and perhaps that is the reason why he

dwells a little wistfully on the natural, matter-of-fact way in which humble people face it.

It is given to Wordsworth to feel and look upon man's death with no more horror than a tree's :

> 'Meanwhile the man,
> If not already from the wood retired
> To die at home, was haply, as I knew,
> Withering by slow degrees, 'mid gentle air,
> Birds, running streams, and hills so beautiful
> On golden evenings, while the charcoal pile
> Breathed up its smoke, an image of his ghost
> Or spirit that full soon must take her flight.'

Otherwise differing greatly, Tolstoi and Wordsworth are united in praise of the poor, finding in the lives of the humble a greater opportunity for union with God, with nature, and with each other, than the rich can ever have, seeing in their resignation to fate a greater moral grandeur than can ever be attained by speculations of the intellect.

Tolstoi gives his own conclusions, in the speech of the departing angel in '*What Men live by*.'

'And the angel said, "I have learnt that all men live, not by care of themselves, but by love. I knew before that God gave life to men and desires that they should live. Now I understand more than that. I understand that God does not wish men to live apart, and therefore He does not reveal to them what each one needs for himself, but He wishes them to live united, and therefore reveals to each of them what is necessary for all. I have now understood that though it seems to men that they

live by care of themselves, in truth it is love alone by which they live." '

Wordsworth's conclusion is not very different :

' Life, I repeat, is energy of love
Divine or human ; exercised in pain,
In strife, and tribulation ; and ordained,
If so approved and sanctified, to pass
Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy.'

MILTON AND SHAKESPERE AS LOVERS

Milton and Shakespere were both men with susceptible hearts, for whom women had strong attractions. The difference between them is that, while both had the talent for loving, the one used and valued his talent, while the other despised and hid it away.

Milton is an example of a great lover spoiled by wrong opinions. He was disobedient to the heavenly vision: he turned his back upon the radiant form: he shut his ears to the appealing voice. Yet, although he did not obey, he could not forget the vision; the glamour of love's presence made pale his daylight; the unheeded appeal of love's melodious voice made vocal his silences.

Shakespere is an example of a great lover who recognised love's claims, who willingly submitted to love's demands, and therefore has received love's unfading crown.

You cannot gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles: neither do you get a great lover of Shakespere's type from a man of Milton's opinions. Milton's ideal is an impossible one. He will, he must be

loved, but love must entail for him no subjection to the beloved. He will give his poet's heart, but will not surrender his manly pride; and in return he demands such submission as would be incompatible with true love. Milton's attitude springs from an impassioned belief in the inferiority of women. You have only to read Shakespere's writings to see that Shakespere had no such belief. No one has written more generously and nobly about women than Shakespere; and none more slightingly than Milton.

Milton argues from the weakness of one woman that the whole sex will be the same:

> 'Thus it shall befall
> Him who, to worth in woman overtrusting,
> Lets her will rule—'

and from one faithless woman that all will be faithless.

> 'Is it for that such outward ornament
> Were lavish'd on their sex, that inward gifts
> Were left for haste unfinish'd, judgment scant,
> Capacity not raised to apprehend
> Or value what is best
> In choice . . .
> That either they love nothing, or not long?'

How different is Shakespere! When Troilus finds out Cressid's treachery, his first exclamation is:

> 'Let it not be believ'd for womanhood!
> Think, we had mothers—'

And Marina says to her persecutor,

> 'Are you a woman?'
>
> 'What would you have me be, an I be not a woman?'

and Marina answers,

> 'An honest woman, or not a woman.'

To understand Milton aright, we must never forget that he had been brought up a Puritan. In him we have an intensely proud and domineering nature, supported by a stern religious creed, constantly warring with a heart finely susceptible to the allurements of beauty, only too willing a victim of her magic charms. It is because he is so sensitive to women:

> 'In all enjoyments else superior and unmov'd,
> Here only weak against the charm
> Of beauty's powerful glance—'

that his attitude towards her is so resentful and bitter. His religion taught that the charm of beauty's powerful glance is unholy; for him to say, 'For nothing this wide universe I call save thou, my rose, in it thou art my all,' would savour of idolatry, and his proud tyrannical spirit revolted against any subjection, even that of love.

His grievance against women is that they take away his feeling of manly superiority with their too much ornament. They mar his philosophical meditations

with visions of their frail beauty. They disturb the decent harmony to which his ordered days are set, with their strange and haunting music. To be rid of this distraction, he would frame for himself another world in which it did not exist, and we feel he is speaking in his own person when he makes Adam say,

> 'Oh! why did God,
> Creator wise, that peopled highest heaven
> With spirits masculine, create at last
> This novelty on earth, this fair defect
> Of nature, and not fill the world at once
> With men, as angels, without feminine—'

Absolute submission in women to him is the Alpha and Omega; and in this we detect a certain soreness due perhaps to his own lot 'unfortunate in nuptial choice.' The women of his experience were not so submissive as his ideal. He looks at love entirely from the man's point of view. For him, women have no rights, no liberty. They are merely appendages to man, created entirely for his benefit. In theory at least and to his equals, he was a passionate upholder of liberty; but 'who loves that, must first be wise and good,' and unfortunately he did not consider women either the one or the other.

With a noble love of purity and an absolute devotion to

> 'The sublime notion and high mystery
> Which must be uttered to unfold the sage
> And serious doctrine of virginity,'

he yet never attains to a spiritual conception of love such as we find in Shakespere's Sonnets. When woman is treated as an inferior and kept entirely in subjection, I think spiritual love is impossible. Thus, woman is man's ordeal and it is his attitude to her which determines his place in the spiritual scale, so far as love is concerned. Milton never found in real life the woman whom his soul desired. He felt for them, as Othello, when he said to Desdemona,

> 'Oh thou weed
> That art so lovely fair and smellest so sweet
> That the sense aches at thee.'

They never satisfied him, so he set himself to create a woman who should be everything he had missed in women; who should make up to him for all the smarts her wayward sex had inflicted on his susceptible heart. Outwardly she must be lovely enough to satisfy a poet's dream, inwardly she must be furnished with the beauty of holiness, the robe of righteousness, the white raiment of the pure in heart, and yet with it all she must be so infinitely his inferior that he can never feel humiliated in her presence; that is — all these perfections must demand no homage from him. It was an impossible attempt. You cannot endow a woman with all the gifts of the gods, and then add inferiority. You cannot make the same thing perfect and imperfect. Eve, as she stands in all her appealing charm, is the best answer

to Milton's assertion of woman's inferiority. His own heart condemns him. Can any one read the poem and feel that she is inferior to Adam or indeed to any man? 'Women will love her that she is a woman more worth than any man, men that she is the rarest of all women.' No heroine in fiction 'can attain honour demurring upon her.' And it is because she is the impersonation of a great poet's desire that she cannot be inferior. His heart demanded a woman he could love. His intellect and pride insisted that she must be inferior. So he gave in to his heart by making her what she is and satisfied his pride by constantly insisting on her inferiority. This weakness endears Milton to us. It is this strain of inconsequence in the finely poised mind, this contradiction in greatness which makes him so human.

Fixed fate, free will, fore-knowledge absolute are riddles which we cannot solve, and they puzzle us in works of art as in life. An artist sets himself to form a character, which he believes to be the work of his hands, the creation of his brain. He succeeds in forming a lifelike character, but not always the man or woman he intended. It is as if his creation evolved free will independently. Who knows but we may be as great surprises to the Almighty, as sometimes the works of our hands are to us, and perhaps without intention free will came into the universe of its own accord. Whether or not it be free will

the character or the action of some outward agency, certain it is that a man's creations are not always what he meant them to be.

Milton's intention in *Paradise Lost* was certainly not to glorify either Satan or Eve. He wrote it to justify God in His dealings with men and with that impious wretch

'Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms,'

and to show in Adam and Eve how 'beauty is excelled by manly grace and wisdom, which alone is truly fair.'

What is the result?

Adam at the worst is a brutal tyrant and at the best an unutterable bore and tiresome prig. The Almighty does not fare much better at Milton's hands. He has all Adam's faults on a larger scale and to such an extent that we are not surprised to hear that Adam is made in His image.

On the other hand, all our sympathies are enlisted on the side of the archangel ruined, and of Eve, Adam's unappreciated wife.

The intercourse between Adam and Eve consists in servile adoration on her part and condescending acceptance on his. He is much enamoured of her beauty, but more of her submissive charm. Throughout, he is conceited and ungenerous. He never ceases to remind her of the humiliating fact that she is formed from his side:

'To give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart . . .
Daughter of God and man, accomplish'd Eve—
. . . Leave not the faithful side
That gave thee being . . .'

Thus he addresses her when he is pleased, but when he is angry he does not scruple to upbraid her with being,

'But a rib
Crooked by nature, bent, as now appears,
More to the part sinister, from me drawn.
Well if thrown out, as supernumerary
To my just number found.'

Adam is a lukewarm lover: the courtship is all on her side. He does not take the most excellent advice:

'If I might teach thee wit,
Better it were, though not to love
Yet love to tell me so . . .'

Instead of regarding her beauty as the seemly 'raiment of his heart,' he looks upon it as a snare which he must avoid. In superior love he occasionally uses terms of endearment, but always with a little surprise at his own condescension.

'Sole partner, and sole part of all these joys,
Dearer thyself than all . . .
. . . To me, beyond
Compare, above all living creatures dear!'

To the angel he frankly confesses that the power she has over him is too great to be quite compatible

with his manly dignity, and this troubles him a good deal. But Eve is not by to hear, or his confession of her attractions would have been much more guarded.

> 'For well I understand, in the prime end
> Of Nature, her the inferior in the mind
> And inward faculties, which most excel;
> In outward, also, her resembling less
> His image who made both, and less expressing
> The character of that dominion given
> O'er other creatures: yet, when I approach
> Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
> And in herself complete, so well to know
> Her own, that what she wills to do or say
> Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.
> All higher knowledge in her presence falls
> Degraded; wisdom in discourse with her
> Loses, discountenanced, and like folly shews;
> Authority and reason on her wait,
> As one intended first, not after made
> Occasionally; and, to consummate all,
> Greatness of mind, and nobleness, their seat
> Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
> About her, as a guard angelic placed.'

The heavenly powers seem in league with Adam against poor Eve; for the angel, instead of bidding Adam down on 'his knees and thank heaven fasting for a good woman's love,' advises him to

> 'Weigh with her thyself;
> Then value—'

and to love judiciously and not too much. Surely

to tell Adam to love moderately and to have more self-esteem is superfluous!

There is one person in the garden, however, who appreciates woman at her proper value. We know that Eve almost made a puritan of the Devil. A little more and Paradise had still been ours!

'Such pleasure took the serpent to behold
This flowery plat, the sweet recess of Eve
Thus early, thus alone: her heavenly form
Angelic, but more soft, and feminine,
Her graceful innocence, her every air
Of gesture, or least action, overawed
His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved
His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought.
That space the evil one abstracted stood
From his own evil, and for the time remain'd
Stupidly good, of enmity disarm'd,
Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.'

One cannot help feeling that a little of Satan's annoyance on first seeing them, when he exclaims

'Sight hateful, sight tormenting!'

is due to Adam's intolerable lack of breeding, and at Satan's first speech to her, we draw a breath of relief, we feel that here is the right thing at last. This is how a woman ought to be approached!

'Why sleep'st thou, Eve? now is the pleasant time,
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
To the night-warbling bird, that now awake
Tunes sweetest his love-labour'd song; now reigns
Full-orbed the moon, and with more pleasing light

Shadowy sets off the face of things; in vain,
If none regard; heaven wakes with all his eyes
Whom to behold but thee, nature's desire?
In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.'

In his criticism of *Paradise Lost,* Addison has a note on this very passage which I will quote to show how opinions differ:

'An injudicious poet would have made Adam talk through the whole work in such sentiments as these. But flattery and falsehood are not the courtship of Milton's Adam and could not be heard of Eve, in her state of innocence, excepting only in a dream produced on purpose to taint her imagination.'

Throughout his essay, Addison praises Adam and condemns Eve. Not many people would do so now. Our point of view has changed. Poetry is for all time, but not the ideas which it contains, and Milton is not a poet who keeps abreast of the times. Well, if Adam never flatters, Eve certainly does! The tone of her speeches is uniformly humble. For example:

'My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st
Unargued I obey; so God ordains;
God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
Is woman's happiest knowledge, and her praise,'

or this particularly fulsome speech:

. . . 'I chiefly, who enjoy
So far the happier lot, enjoying thee
Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou
Like consort to thyself canst nowhere find.'

When reading this passage out aloud, my husband remarked sadly, 'You never said that to me.' Which shows that the old Adam still forms part of the composition of twentieth-century manhood!

The more she is slighted and undervalued, the more attractive does Milton's Eve appear in her beauty, her gentleness, her helpless dependence on Adam: in her touching fondness for her impossible husband. Her love is as unselfish as his is selfish. She resents nothing, demands nothing; but is contented to give all. To her shall be given the blessing of the meek. She glories in her humiliation. The fact of being formed of Adam's unnecessary rib seems to give her pleasure.

> 'Adam, from whose dear side I boast me sprung.'

Her love is to her all in all.

> 'With thee conversing, I forget all time;
> All seasons, and their change, all please alike.
> Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
> With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the sun,
> When first on this delightful land he spreads
> His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
> Glistering with dew; fragrant the fertile earth
> After soft showers; and sweet the coming on
> Of grateful evening mild; then, silent night,
> With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,
> And these the gems of heaven, her starry train:
> But neither breath of morn, when she ascends
> With charm of earliest birds, nor rising sun
> On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,

Glistering with dew; nor fragrance after showers;
Nor grateful evening mild; nor silent night,
With this her solemn bird; nor walk by moon
Or glittering starlight, without thee is sweet.'

The Garden of Eden as Milton shows it is not a place for any self-respecting woman, and no other woman but Milton's Eve would have endured it. She, however, stays and 'turns everything to prettiness.' It is to her that we owe the great beauty of the fourth book, and her loveliness inspires such a passage as this, the description of the first marriage:

'Iris all hues, roses and jessamine,
Reared high their flourish'd heads between, and wrought
Mosaic; under foot the violet,
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Broider'd the ground, more colour'd than with stone
Of costliest emblem: other creature here,
Beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter none,
Such was their awe of man. In shadier bower,
More sacred and sequester'd, though but feigned,
Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor nymph
Nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess,
With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,
Espoused Eve decked first her nuptial bed,
And heavenly choirs the hymenæan sung,
What day the genial Angel to our sire
Brought her, in naked beauty more adorned,
More lovely than Pandora, whom the gods
Endowed with all their gifts; and, O, too like
In sad event, when, to the unwiser son
Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared
Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire.'

All the way along, Adam is censorious and insufferable, Eve charming and submissive; but it is not till the end that Adam comes out in his true colours. He is then frankly brutal, without a thought for any one but himself.

Compare part of Adam's speech after the Fall to a passage from Shakespere. They are both on the same subject, though Milton calls it 'female snares,' Shakespere 'true love.' Milton probably had Shakespere's lines in his mind when he wrote:

'This mischief had not then befallen [mankind]
And more that shall befall; innumerable
Disturbances on earth through female snares,
And strait conjunction with this sex: for either
He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake;
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain,
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gained
By a far worse; or, if she love, withheld
By parents; or his happiest choice too late
Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound
To a fell adversary, his hate or shame;
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound.'

(*Midsummer Night's Dream*)

'Ah me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth:
But, either it was different in blood;
Or else mis-graffed, in respect of years;
Or else it stood upon the choice of friends:
Or if there were a sympathy in choice,

War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say,—Behold!
The jaws of darkness do devour it up;
So quick bright things come to confusion.'

It is true Adam takes the apple, not deceived 'but fondly overcome by female charm,' but afterwards he does not scruple to say to Eve that his motive was self-sacrifice:

'I
Who might have lived, and 'joyed immortal bliss,
Yet willingly chose rather death with thee.'

Eve repentant becomes only the more adorable, and one wonders any man with heart in breast could so long resist her tender appeals:

'His life so late, and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress.'

Yet when all is said and done, to the ordinary person there is something lacking in Milton's Eve. Is it not just her submissiveness we quarrel with? We would dearly like to have Adam matched with a woman like Pauline in 'A Winter's Tale.' When through 'the sweet sad years, the melancholy years' we try to picture the mother of mankind, the ideal, the visionary Eve, it is not the Eve of Milton whom we imagine, sweet and pathetic figure though she be.

It is rather the Eve of pictures by Blake or G. F. Watts, mysterious, formless suggestions of womanhood, hints of something vast and vague: mother of mourners and revellers, of bridegrooms and widows, of heroes and cowards, of martyrs and executioners, of saints and sinners, of virgins and harlots. We know not what is in that soul brooding on things to come, what elemental forces make that heart to beat, what immortal hope and what agonising despair shine in those luminous eyes. But this we know, that she is not submissive, Mother of Mankind and, in the mystery of the ages to come, Mother of God: at heart, she is a rebel!

In Milton's shorter English poems, love is hardly mentioned. It is perhaps characteristic that in the two poems 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso,' when enumerating the pleasures of the mirthful man and of the melancholy,

> 'Dear deluding woman, the joy of joys'

is hardly mentioned; although in 'Il Penseroso' there is a passage which indirectly concerns love, and is very beautiful:

> 'Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
> Such notes as, warbled to the string,
> Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
> And made hell grant what love did seek.'

I shall close this part of my paper with a quotation from a very tender poem on a dead woman by

Milton which, although it is not about love, could only have been written by a poet with a feeling heart:

'Gentle lady, may thy grave
Peace and quiet ever have;
After this thy travail sore,
Sweet rest seize thee evermore,
That, to give the world increase,
Shorten'd hast thy own life's lease.
Here, besides the sorrowing
That thy noble house doth bring,
Here be tears of perfect moan
Wept for thee in Helicon.'

I do not think there ever has been, or ever will be a writer who has done more justice to women than Shakespere. His women are not only men's equals, but their superiors. There is only one faithless woman, Cressida. There are many faithless men.

On entering the realm of books we shake off to a certain extent the haunting 'Thou shalt not's' of real life, and it is easier to obey the command 'Judge not that ye be not judged' in relation to the heroes and heroines of fiction. The tiresome thing about life is that—so often are the worthy people not attractive and the attractive people not worthy—there is a constant struggle between duty and inclination; and so we find it a relief to seek the society of people in books where we can do as we please, love attractive people because they are attractive, and even, without a qualm of conscience, hate worthy people because they are worthy. I

daresay we might be happier if we adopted the same attitude to living people, but unfortunately most of us are too well brought up. It is how children behave. They never like people from moral reasons, and they seem to get on better in society than grown-up people. Anyway, some of our dearest friends in books are those whom we could hardly like, if we knew them in the flesh. Just think what would happen to our warm attachment to Sir John Falstaff if we met him in a modern drawing-room! I am afraid that intolerable deal of sack would be too much for us. We should then discover that he was little better than one of the wicked; but now that we are sure that we can keep him safely between the covers of our Shakespere, our sentiments towards him remain affectionate—we have 'much to say on behalf of that Falstaff.'

We are only bound to disapprove of people in books whom we do not like. Now, among all Shakespere's important women, there are not very many, except Goneril and Regan, whom it is impossible to like. Some of the minor characters are not very attractive, but these do not count. The same cannot be said of his men. He has made some very contemptible men, three in particular—Posthumus, Imogen's unworthy husband, Hero's Claudio, and Bertram. These three all commit the same sin, that of lack of appreciation of a good woman.

Shakespere's women are not like Milton's Eve.

There are no really submissive women. The gentle lady married to the Moor was submissive, but only where she loved and, although Othello murdered her, he did not treat her as Adam treated Eve. She was not submissive when she

> 'made a gross revolt;
> Tying her duty, beauty, wit and fortunes
> In an extravagant and wheeling stranger.'

Eve's love for Adam was not passionate like Desdemona's. It was a calm and deep affection, and her submission was of the essence of her whole nature.

In the Comedies are to be found Shakespere's most delightful women, but not his most moving love-scenes. Successful love is always apt to be insipid, and people who live happily ever after do not interest us as lovers. There is something almost repulsive to the onlooker in the sight of married happiness, however gratifying it may be to the principals; and this is the reason why the Browning love-letters are to some people so unsatisfactory. It would seem as if love needed darkness and the shadow of death to make its light burn clearly. Therefore Shakespere's three great love poems, *Troilus and Cressida, Anthony and Cleopatra,* and *Othello* are all tragedies.

I cannot bring myself quite to like Cressida. It is not only that she is faithless. Some of the most lovable heroines both of fiction and real life have been unfaithful. For instance, Natasha in *War and Peace,*

and that most delightful woman in Thomas Hardy's *A Pair of Blue Eyes* were not conspicuous for their constancy. It is more common to be faithful than to be attractive. The most ordinary, the most repulsive women can be faithful, 'Alas, it is our vice, our fault!' Unfortunately we suspect Cressida of something worse than unfaithfulness. We suspect that she never loved Troilus at all. Her reception by the Greek generals shows that, at any rate, she was a woman entirely lacking in dignity. In his delineation of her character Shakespere does not show us her charm as he does Cleopatra's. We are left to find it in the mirror of Troilus' love. Without Anthony, Cleopatra would be quite as irresistible, but without Troilus to interpret we should not care about Cressida.

The great love of Troilus throws a glamour over Cressida, and we feel we must take an interest in her, not for her sake but for his. To inspire such a love is surely a great achievement, and what has she done for Troilus? Has she not given him the joys of heaven here on earth and given him a place among the lovers of all time, so that when we 'sit grown quiet at the name of love' we think of Troilus. That Shakespere took him as a pattern of love is seen by the many references to him throughout the plays. Thus Benedict—

'But in loving, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of Panders . . . why, they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self, in love. . . .'

Thus Rosalind—

'Troilus had his brains dashed out with a Grecian club; yet he did what he could to die before; and he is one of the patterns of love.'

Thus Lorenzo—

'In such a night as this
When the sweet wind did gentle kiss the trees;
And they did make no noise:
In such a night,
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls,
And sigh'd his soul towards the Grecian tents
Where Cressid lay that night.'

There is hardly anything in Shakespere more passionate than Troilus' speech outside Cressida's house:

'I am giddy; expectation whirls me round.
The imaginary relish is so sweet
That it enchants my sense: what will it be,
When that the watery palate tastes indeed
Love's thrice repured nectar; death, I fear me;
Swooning destruction; or some joy too fine,
Too subtle potent, tuned too sharp in sweetness,
For the capacity of my ruder powers.'

Othello and Desdemona are a very different pair of lovers. Othello has none of Troilus' subtlety and Desdemona none of Cressida's lightness. With the exception of Cleopatra, Shakespere's women differ from his men in the quality of their love. There is not a trace in Shakespere of such sentiments as:

'All thy passions matched with mine
Are as moonlight unto sunlight,
Or as water unto wine.'

Neither does he go to the opposite extreme like Thomas Hardy, and make his women more passionate than his men. In this, as in everything else, he makes woman quite man's equal but with a difference. And this difference is never more clearly shown than in Othello and Desdemona. Othello's love is a consuming fire, which burns up his whole nature. It is a torrent which carries his boat away with no steersman at the helm: an earthquake which knocks down his house about his ears. Desdemona's love is a light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. It is a calm and gently flowing river on which her boat is borne to its desired haven. It is a sure foundation on which her house is built. No one would say that Othello's love was greater than hers, but the quality is different. Hers is fine and spiritual and rare: his is grand and elemental. This play is unique in its power to touch the heart. We think of Desdemona with reverential tenderness as of something holy. Here are no 'trains, no gins and toils, no fair enchanted cup and warbling charms,' but 'a fine woman, a fair woman, a sweet woman,' with the simple attractions of goodness and purity, the loveliness of virtue.

Shakespere's whole conception of love is a spiritual one, and this has to some extent affected even his dramatic characters. They are true to life, but they are also true to Shakespere. The source of their being is his noble heart and they still retain some of

the clearness of the fountain from which they sprang. Thus none of his lovers are base: and even in his descriptions of passion he gives it an intensity which raises it above itself to a realm of spiritual dignity. If you think how any other author of his time might, in fact would, have treated the subject of Anthony and Cleopatra, my meaning will be clear.

Cleopatra is the finest and subtlest of all Shakespere's women, perhaps of all his characters. She possesses to the fullest extent a quality which makes women attractive above everything else. But what it is, is hard to say. It is an elusive quality which we cannot define, although we feel its potency. We have no word that is quite right for it. Perhaps 'charm' is the best, but 'charm' is very inadequate. At one time or another in our lives we have felt its power. Perhaps we have sat in a drawing-room among lovely and good women, and given them the full homage of our hearts. The door opens and another woman comes in, who may not be beautiful at all in the ordinary sense of the word, but all eyes turn to her; every word she says seems something rich and strange, and we would not lose one gesture of her hand, one tone of her voice, for all the boasted beauty of the others. We look in consternation at the lovely creatures of a minute ago, and find that their clothes are dowdy, their complexions sallow, and that the lustre has somehow faded from their hair and eyes. And yet we know that if she were

gone, all their beauty would come back. This is the effect that Cleopatra has on Shakespere's other heroines. So doth the greater glory dim the less! And this is why, although I know Cleopatra is not submissive, I am keeping Eve well in the background. I have devoted so much of the earlier portion of my paper to showing Eve's charm that I cannot afford to have it blotted out. So I beg of you not to think of Eve just now! Cleopatra's charm is something above reason. Throughout the play we follow this triumphant lady entranced. She laughs us out of patience:

'Herod of Jewry dare not look upon her, but when she is pleased,'

and to dry her tears an emperor would gladly resign his kingdoms:

'Fall not a tear, I say one of them rates
All that is won and lost.'

She is grandly irrational, splendidly foolish, provokingly wilful. Everywhere her infinite variety holds us spell-bound. We have not a dull moment in her presence. And yet there is no reason why we should like her, except the best of reasons—that we cannot help it. Her charms are not made up of beauty, virtue, merit. We feel sure that Anthony's wife, Octavia, with her modest eyes, was more beautiful than she. She has no use for virtue, and all her merit consists in her extreme cleverness and charm. She

is not a good woman, nor a kind woman, but simply an adorable woman.

Although a passionate, she is not even a very devoted lover, for we feel that a great part of her passion for Anthony consists in love of her own sense of power, and that had Octavius Caesar been a different man, she would easily have transferred her favour to him, and that she chose a picturesque death not wholly for love of Anthony, but partly from fear that Octavius might prove insensible to her charms.

Octavius Caesar is the kind of man, of whom Browning wrote :

> 'There are plenty, men you call such,
> Unto whom she could discover her whole soul to
> And yet leave much as she found them—'

only the difficulty with Octavius would be that she could not get the length of showing him her soul. Cleopatra's soul is far too fine and rare, too exquisite and feminine a thing to breathe the same air with such a man as he. Near him, her 'angel would become a Fear as being o'erpowered.' At his approach, our little witticisms fall flat and our attempts at brilliancy lose their lustre. He is often a clever man himself, but he is not, like Falstaff, the cause of wit in other people :

> 'For under him, our genius is rebuked'

as Anthony's was. In his presence, Cleopatra's charms would wither up, and she knew it.

Cleopatra would not have made much of Othello. She would have scorned Adam. Troilus would have suited her better, but he is too young. 'The noble ruin of her magick, Anthony' is her perfect match, as much as mere man can be the match of a really charming woman. Like Othello, he is a great soldier, who loves his occupation:

> . . . 'O love,
> That thou couldst see my wars to-day and knewest,
> The royal occupation, thou shouldst see
> A workman in 't.'

But, although beside Cleopatra he is simplicity itself, yet he is not a simple soul like Othello. Anthony would not have murdered Desdemona, but he would have deserted her for Cleopatra, which Othello could never have done:

> 'Nay, had she been true,
> If heaven would make me such another world
> Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
> I 'd not have sold her for it.'

If 'beauty, wisdom, modesty' could settle the heart of Anthony, Octavia had done it; but he needed something more exciting, and he got it. To Octavia, he would appear very subtle, and Octavius Caesar does not find him simple. He has twice Caesar's soldiership, and twice his brains. All the pomp and power, all the splendour and glory of the world have been his. He has feasted at all the tables in life's banquet. He has endured as a soldier, fought as a

hero, overcome as an emperor, schemed and plotted as a statesman, spoken as an artist, conquered as a lover. He is a man who can sway crowds by his oratory, whom his friends love, and for whom his dependants would gladly die.

> 'A rarer spirit never
> Did steer humanity: but you, gods, will give us,
> Some faults to make us men.'

He comes, this prince of men, to lay his conquests, glories, spoils, at Cleopatra's feet. For her, he gives up honour, power, self-esteem. His love for her blots out everything else and in it at last he sinks and disappears, counting the world well lost. And she is so wonderful that to our infatuated eyes his surrender seems only just and proper. There is no doubt the most marvellous thing in nature is a fascinating woman, and to create one is the highest achievement of the artist. Such an one is Cleopatra:

> 'Auld nature swears the lovely dears
> Her noblest work she classes O!
> Her 'prentice hand she tried on man
> An' then she made the lasses O!'

We now turn from Shakespere on love, to Shakespere as a lover: to the Sonnets, where Shakespere, to our wonder and astonishment, has 'unlocked his heart.'

I cannot talk learnedly of the Sonnets, of their chronological order, of the mystery of the person to

whom they are addressed, and of the many side issues about which so much has been written. These things do not seem to me to matter much. It is the Sonnets themselves which matter and they are our priceless possession. It is of little consequence that many of them are written to a man friend. They have become the universal voice of love, the mouthpiece of all those through the ages to whom the commonplace of our everyday life has been transfigured by love's glamour. One wonders how Milton could read the Sonnets and still retain his attitude to love. For here, love is shown not as a thing to be despised and repressed, but as the highest thing in human nature, the only part of infinity in which we have a share. Here humility appears as the virtue of true greatness. Here the greatest intellect the world has known becomes the humblest, and finds its truest liberty in being a slave to love. Compared to this, how unworthy seems Milton's pride, how narrow his affections.

> 'Never believe, though in my nature reigned
> All frailties that besiege all kind of blood,
> That it could so preposterously be stained
> To leave for nothing all thy sum of good:
> For nothing this wide universe I call,
> Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.'

The Sonnets reveal a strange drama: that of a beloved friend and a beloved woman, who are both unworthy of the love which is lavished upon them.

The lady steals away the friend, and the friend, the lady.

> 'Both find each other and I lose both twain.'
>
> 'Him have I lost, thou hast both him and me.
> He pays the whole, and yet am I not free.'

This is surely an occasion for much resentment, and yet neither the Sonnets to the lady nor to the friend on this theme are resentful. To the lady, no reproaches at all are addressed on this subject; for I think the reproaches which are addressed to her, such as :

> 'For I have sworn thee fair and thought thee bright
> Who art as black as hell and dark as night'

and several others in the same strain, do not refer to this particular treason, but are rather the ejaculations of a man under the spell of an infatuation of which his reason disapproves but from which he cannot free himself.

The Sonnets to the friend on this special subject are only mildly reproachful. Instead, the poet bends all his energies to find excuses for the robbery which has been committed upon himself.

> 'That I an accessory needs must be
> To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.'

This is a puzzling situation. One would think that indignation here is justifiable, and that submission to such a slight is grovelling. We are faced with two alternatives, either that Shakespere did not care, or

that his magnanimity is quite beyond us. That he did care and very deeply, both for the friend and the woman, I think is proved quite clearly by the rest of the Sonnets. Therefore we are left with the latter alternative. Most love, as we know it, is mere selfishness. We love our friends for what we can get out of them, for the pleasure they give us, by their goodness, their beauty, or their intellect; or else we love them because they love us. Ordinary love is not a very exalted feeling. But there must be some other kind of love. We know that to be kind to the unthankful and the evil is a characteristic of the Deity, but it is rare among mortals. When our friends prove unworthy, we generally cast them off, and there are certain wrongs to which we think no man of spirit can submit. These are the ordinary standards. But why should we expect Shakespere to adhere to the ordinary standards? He was not an ordinary man, and I think the Sonnets reveal that his was a love that could endure all wrongs, even the most bitter.

> 'O benefit of ill! now I find true
> That better is by evil still made better;
> And ruined love, when it is built anew,
> Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.'

I have said before that it is hard to find a parallel to Eve among Shakespere's heroines; but I think the true parallel is in himself. He outdoes Eve in submissiveness, and the analogy is her vindication.

If we read the Sonnets aright, we understand at last, that it is only our own imperfections which make us rebel at Eve's submission; that she has indeed the better part, that submission is the true garment of love, and that self-sacrifice is the greatest thing in life. The Sonnets are the Bible of love poetry. They are the sacred book of all love's literature. One would not think that Shakespere and St. Paul had much in common, yet here in the Sonnets is the 'Charity which suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not, which vaunteth not herself, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil: the charity which beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things.' I have not added 'hopeth all things' because what strikes one about the Sonnets is their extreme sadness. From reading the Plays alone, one would be inclined to think Shakespere an optimist; but the Sonnets are not optimistic. Gloom pervades them, gloom invaded here and there by flashes of fierce light. This sadness is not the sorrow of slighted love. Love can forgive injuries and endure slights, glory in humiliations, but there are two mortal foes—Time and Death—with whom he cannot cope. And it is the fear of what Time and Death will do to the Beloved which hangs as a nightmare over the Sonnets. This is the inevitable sadness of a loving heart, faced with the inexorable in time and death, faced with the agony of seeing time's touch on beauty, death's hand on life. The whole

of life is over in so brief a space: there is scarce time for loving.

> 'Injurious time, now with a robber's haste,
> Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how:
> As many farewells as be stars in heaven,
> With distinct breath, and consigned kisses to them,
> He fumbles up into a loose adieu,
> And scants us with a single famished kiss,
> Distasted with the salt of broken tears.'

Other poets faced with these things have taken refuge in claiming an immortality for love beyond the grave. Shakespere does not so. The only mention of a possible future life is:

> 'So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
> You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.'

And this I think refers more to the immortality of the soul, which might exist although all its love were forgotten. And in the Sonnet to the dark lady:

> 'Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
> And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
> Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
> Within be fed, without be rich no more:
> So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
> And Death once dead, there 's no more dying then,'

which refers to the immortality of goodness—leaving love out of the question. Whatever his beliefs, Shakespere takes things as they appear, and fights love's losing battle with time and death on mortal ground. All victories are not truly admirable: all conquerors are not crowned—' 'Tis sometimes paltry

to be Caesar'—and he shows us that there is a quality in love and beauty which, though time vanquish the one and death destroy the other, makes them still remain greater than either time or death. To put off this inevitable defeat of love, he employs subterfuges. He defies time and death by pointing to the immortality of his verses. They at least will keep his love alive in future ages!

'O how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wreckful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout
Nor gates of steel so strong but time decays?
O fearful meditation! Where alack
Shall time's best jewel from time's chest lie hid,
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back,
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O none, unless this miracle have might
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.'

'Rise, resty Muse, my love's sweet face survey,
If time have any wrinkle graven there;
If any, be a satire to decay,
And make Time's spoils despised everywhere.
Give my love fame faster than Time wastes life;
So thou prevent'st his scythe and crooked knife.'

He claims that love has the power of seeing with an inward eye, which is blind to the ravages of time:

'So that eternal love in love's fresh case
Weighs not the dust and injury of age;
Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,
But makes antiquity for aye his page:
Finding the first conceit of love there bred
Where time and outward form would show it dead.'

This idea of the immortality of his verses upholds him throughout the poems. It is his greatest consolation, the one thing that he can lay with confidence on the altar of his love. What makes the situation so poignant is that this transitory love is everything to the writer. It makes up for all the sorrows, disappointments and inequalities of life. Love makes up for life's bereavements :

> 'But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
> All losses are restored and sorrows end.'

Its disappointments :

> 'For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
> That then I scorn to change my state with kings.'

Its weariness :

> 'Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
> Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.'

The one thing to be feared is the loss of love. Nothing else matters compared to it :

> 'Then hate me when thou wilt; if ever, now;
> Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross.
> Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
> And do not drop in for an after-loss;
> Ah, do not, when my heart hath 'scaped this sorrow,
> Come in the rearward of a conquered woe;
> Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
> To linger out a purposed overthow.
> If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
> When other petty griefs have done their spite,

But in the onset come, so shall I taste
At first the very worst of fortune's might;
And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compared with loss of thee will not seem so.'

Love is better than all worldly possession:

'Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,
Of more delight than hawks or horses be;
And having thee, of all men's pride I boast.'

Absence gives to love the joy of expectations:

'Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since, seldom coming, in the long year set,
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,
Or captain jewels in a carcanet.
So is the time that keeps you as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,
To make some special instant special blest,
By new unfolding his imprison'd pride.
Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph, being lack'd, to hope.'

To a lover even the beloved's faults are dear:

'As on the finger of a throned queen
The basest jewel will be well esteemed:
So are those errors that in thee are seen
To truth translated, and for true things deemed.'

Love can endure bad treatment:

'Such is my love, to thee I so belong,
That for thy right myself will bear all wrong.'

Love is so humble, that it can acquiesce in its own desertion:

'Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.'

But the beloved's desertion means the death of the lover :

> ' Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,
> Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie,
> O, what a happy title do I find,
> Happy to have thy love, happy to die ! '

This love is not dependent on any particular virtue in the beloved. Neither of Shakespere's friends appears to have been particularly virtuous. The joy of loving is for the lover. His happiness is in giving : his triumph is in self-sacrifice. It is he who loveth not, who knoweth not God : not he who is not loved. Thus love is its own reward, and if you can love enough, whether you succeed or fail, you have your heart's desire.

I think what made Milton fail was that he wished to take and not to give. His love was wholly selfish, and thus it is that he, the puritan, the lover of chastity, the high-minded religious enthusiast, has an infinitely more carnal and less spiritual conception of love than Shakespere, the worldling, the play-actor, the tolerant lover of the dark lady. What was missed in the temple is found in the tavern.

I shall close by quoting the best-known of Shakespere's Sonnets on love :

> ' Let me not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments. Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds,
> Or bends with the remover to remove :

O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth 's unknown, although his height be taken;
Love 's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.'

'RHYTHM'

ACCORDING to the dictionary, Rhythm is the agreement of measure and time: the recurrence of definitely stated intervals of time serving as a measure in any sort of movement or progression—periodic emphasis.

In modern times, however, the meaning of Rhythm has become more elastic and mystical than the dictionary sense. We speak of visual Rhythm, meaning an arrangement of line and form which produces in us the same effect as music, always present in nature and in the best pictures.

Rhythm is not a subject to be approached coldly. We regard it with a mysterious emotion, all the deeper because its origin is obscure, and yet it is the daily bread of the eye and ear. Rhythm in its simplest form produces repose. We see this in the rocking of a cradle, the ticking of a clock. It is easier to go to sleep in a room with a clock than without it. There is no such thing as absolute silence, absolute stillness. When silence becomes oppressive we hear the beating of our own heart, and if the silence became intenser still, we should hear the stealthy movement of the tiny cells which form our bodies. In other words, we should hear our flesh creep.

Then there is always movement, even the darkness seems to steal about us, as we have all felt with some trepidation in lonely places. Milton speaks of 'smoothing the raven down of darkness,' thereby recognising that it is alive.

If absolute stillness, absolute silence were thinkable, it would mean annihilation. The only absolute thing we know of is death.

Some forms of art rock us to sleep as a cradle. For instance, the pictures of Albert Moore, Berceuses and Lullabies in music, and such a poem as *The Lotus-Eaters*! In Albert Moore's pictures, the constant rock, rock, of the rhythmical composition soothes the nerves and takes out the creases of the brain. Thus they are restful to look at, and delightful to have with us. In the same way, lullabies in music and poems like *The Lotus-Eaters* give us

> 'Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
> Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes,'

and so are also restful.

Still I do not think this is the highest form of Rhythm. We need satisfaction more than we need repose. We want rapture more than we want satisfaction. Beauty is the only thing which satisfies the heart's desire, and there is no beauty without Rhythm. Yet, as 'one star differeth from another star in glory,' so there are many forms of Rhythm.

The highest form is seen in nature and in the works

of great artists, who have discovered nature's secret. Looking at these, we get something more than repose. We get rest for the senses, but also satisfaction for the spirit.

> 'We are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul;
> While, with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.'

In the sense of balance, symmetry, proportion, pattern, all great works of art are full of that quality, which, in default of a better word, we call Rhythm. They are all founded upon harmony: not a cold harmony, but a living harmony. Rhythm—in the wider sense—is balance, symmetry, proportion, harmony. It is all these, with something else added, and it is that mysterious something which we want to get at and which we can feel, but it eludes our definition. For instance, take two charcoal drawings in outline of the same figure. They may both be equally correct and yet the one may be a great work of art, and the other merely a mechanical drawing. The difference is that, in the mechanical drawing, the outline is only an outline, a mechanical device for showing the shape of the human figure. In the work of art, the outline is not an outline, but a fiery, quivering, eager thing. An outline! Why, the artist has stretched his heart-strings round the figure, and they tremble and vibrate with the living

Rhythm of his heart-beats. This makes the drawing as different from the other as life from death.

Apparently we and nature are fated to strive after perfection, and when we get a glimpse of it, to repudiate it as monotonous. Thus the perfect form is only an abstract idea. There is no such thing as perfect form in created things. All perfect symmetry is machine-made. Man has been a poor pupil of nature in his mechanical designs. He makes them too correct. He copies the letter without the spirit. There is a part of London, which one passes in the train going to Kent. It is composed of workmen's houses, each one exactly like the other. Even to pass through it in the train is depressing—what must it be to live there! This is Rhythm without accent, and it is unbearable. One wonders how an immortal soul can exist among such surroundings. Do the children ever smile there? Can any one sing?

The whole creation is 'groaning and travailing in pain together' after perfection. Nature seems always striving to evolve the perfect form, never getting to it. All her circular forms are imperfect: all her balance, symmetry, repetition is not absolute, or, strange to say, it would be tiresome. The nearer a man is to so-called perfection, the more boring he becomes. The fact is, we want the absolute yet cannot bear the thought of it. Is then all our striving after perfection fruitless? Is perfection merely a chimera?

I think the reason perfection—as we apprehend it—is tiresome is because our finite mind can only take in certain aspects of infinity. We take in its form, its symmetry, its balance, and they leave us cold because they are not real: they are only certain aspects of reality. We cannot grasp perfection's Rhythm. 'We shall be satisfied when we awake with Thy likeness,' that is, we shall be satisfied when we behold the perfect circle, living, vibrating, rhythmic.

This paper is full of religious symbols, because religion is the only thing which furnishes us with symbols adequate to infinity—and art is, after all, religion. The circle symbolises perfection, because it satisfies our longing for continuity. It is never ending.

All things in nature have some mode of being. Even a stone has its own rigid existence. It is more alive than a bad picture of a stone, or than a tea-cup. The charcoal drawing shows the rhythmic line, but besides the rhythmic line, there is the rhythmic composition which is infinitely greater. Nature is full of rhythmic compositions, but they are all parts of the whole. They are the 'Cornet, Flute, Harp, Sackbut, Psaltery, Dulcimer, and all kinds of music,' and taken together make up the great orchestra of nature: 'the rapture of the hallelujah sent from all that breathes and is.'

We cannot all grasp the harmony as a whole, but we can hear the individual parts.

Here are some examples :

Stand by the sea and watch the waves : how they come in mighty procession, as a marching army, each one keeping in time, each one moving in order, each one taking the same curve. See how they break upon the shore, one following another on and on, day after day, year after year, till the end of time, when there shall be no more sea ! This is Rhythm.

Watch the flame of fire : how the lines start from the centre, leap upward and flow to a point, then down again, and another succeeds, still in the same order, still with infinite variations, taking the same shape. Flames are not exactly alike as waves are, but their nature is that their lines, however varied, must start from the centre, flow outward and vanish in a point. This continuity in variety delights the eye of the beholder and this is rhythmic.

Watch the trees in a wind : how they strain and leap, all the branches coming from the trunk, as the flame flowing outward, straining to a point, each rebellious one brought into order by the wind's will, then falling as the wind dies. This is Rhythm.

One might say, why take the sea, the tree, the flame ? Here is a child running, is not this rhythmic ? Probably it is, but the Rhythm of ordinary movement is too subtle for our senses to grasp. However, take the same child and make him run to music : make him subject to a law we comprehend, and there you

have the flame, the sea, the trees : ordered movement in time.

Then look at a lily. Here is Rhythm in the germ ! The lily is motionless, but the lines flow, all coming from the centre, spreading outward, ending in a point, taking the flame shape, and the eye follows them, beginning at the centre, outward, up, and still beginning again, drinking in beauty, recognising order.

Now turn to a beautiful sunset landscape. Drink in the stillness. Here is repose and rest : yet the silence sinks like music on the heart. The eye rests upon the horizontal cloud lines and they give an intense feeling of quiet ; but were these horizontal lines alone and absolutely still, they would stand for death, negation, nothingness. On the contrary, they are tense, they vibrate with life, and simply serve for pauses in the music to which the whole scene is moving. There is the vibration in the atmosphere, the accents of light and shade, from dark to light, from light to dark again, and over all advancing darkness descending, slowly silencing each individual note, blending all into one general harmony.

These are all only isolated instances of Rhythm. The Rhythm of nature is nature seen as a whole, in which these examples take their place. The waves of the sea, the trees straining in the wind, the flame of fire—these give the curve of movement : these lead the dance ; but the still things take their place,

imitating over again the moving curve in endless repetition, in endless variety. The little wayside flower takes the star shape. The flowing lines of the shell copy the waving branches of the trees. The humble blade of grass takes the wave curve. The earth revolves round the sun : the stars turn in circles, each in his own orbit. Day succeeds day, night, night : year follows year, and on and on in constant flux, the rhythmic movement swings 'through melancholy space and doleful time,' the flowing line, the centre, the curve, till the mind sinks, dizzy : the heart oppressed with beauty seems to cease to beat, and the dilating soul

> 'Enrapt, transfused,
> Into the mighty vision passing—there
> As in her natural form, swells vast to Heaven !'

This harmony of nature, as seen in man's imagination, produces the highest æsthetic emotion, and although this emotion is caused principally by moving forms, or forms which copy movement, it carries with it a feeling of sound :

> 'Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter—'

and all these beautiful lines of nature, rising, flowing out, passing onward in never-ending jubilant procession, in harmony, symmetry, pattern, seem stretching out hands as it were to deity, moving onward to the goal, inviting us to fall into step, to keep time to

the music, the same music which the morning stars sang together when the sons of God shouted for joy :

> 'That undisturbéd Song of pure concent
> Aye sung before the sapphire-colour'd throne
> To Him that sits thereon.'

The rhythmical life would be the life which obeys this summons, which joins this ordered march : whose every act is in due proportion, whose whole being is flowing onward, going out—Godward—to the final goal. It was this rhythmical life which the prophet meant, when he said :

> 'Then shall thy peace be as a river,
> And thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.'

Thy peace shall not be dead like a stagnant pool, but living, growing, moving as a mighty river, ever filling up to the brim in onward progress, until at last thy river peace shall lose itself in depth on depth of that fathomless sea, which is the peace of God. Thy righteousness shall not be as a lake shut in by mountains, but infinite as the sea, harmonious, vital, active !

Most of us who have a sense of beauty feel the appeal, but we are not rhythmic through and through as nature is. We regret the flame that dies : we mourn for the broken wave : we turn with loathing from death, because the individual has perished, and the march for us has seemed to end.

To nature there is no individual. She substitutes

for the dying flame a never ending succession of new ones: for the broken wave, she creates another and another, and to us she says:

> 'And fear not lest existence closing your
> Account, and mine, should know the like no more;
> The Eternal Saki from that Bowl has poured,
> Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.'

Because our minds are finite, we fix them on minor details and find they are not rhythmic when taken out of their place. We lose the sense of order, because we cannot see the great procession as a whole. Nevertheless the order is there, and has been revealed to artists on mounts of transfiguration; and the object of great art is to show this living order in a form which ordinary people can grasp.

On such a mount of transfiguration Wordsworth stood when he wrote:

> 'I was only then
> Contented, when with bliss ineffable
> I felt the sentiment of Being spread
> O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
> O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
> And human knowledge, to the human eye
> Invisible, yet liveth to the heart;
> O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,
> Or beats the gladsome air; o'er all that glides
> Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,
> And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not
> If high the transport, great the joy I felt,
> Communing in this sort through earth and heaven

With every form of creature, as it looked
Towards the Uncreated with a countenance
Of adoration, with an eye of love.
One song they sang, and it was audible,
Most audible, then, when the fleshly ear,
O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain,
Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed.'

But different minds are affected differently by the same thing, and here is an example among many of this Rhythm of nature producing æsthetic sadness instead of æsthetic joy.

'One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.

'The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.

'The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

'All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again . . .

'The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.'

As an example of the same spirit of sadness produced by the unending repetition of the Rhythm of nature —pictorially—take Dürer's 'Melancholy.'

The seated figure is surrounded by all nature's symbols of perfection. She is tired of their repetition. She does not feel, like Wordsworth, that they lead to deity, but only that they come back upon themselves.

The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. In front of her is the perfect circle, but for her it does not vibrate. Beside her are geometric figures, but she cannot tell what they lead to. On the wall are the scales—poor futile instruments in which to weigh immensity! Beside them, the ladder meant to scale heaven, but which only reaches to the house-top. In her hand, the compass by which she can draw the perfect circle, but cannot give it Rhythm. On her knee, the Book of Knowledge shut. In the background stretches the inscrutable unplumbed sea. Above it, the hard and cruel sky, crossed by a rainbow, which she has not noticed, and a comet, which to her is but a mockery, a will-o'-the-wisp! Above her head is the square frame of numbers, which holds the secret of the number of her days. She does not know the number, but the hour-glass close at hand reminds her that they will be few and evil; and the bell seems ready to toll for her passing. Yet the picture is full of the very beauty which has made her despairing: the repetition she has found so monotonous: the 'much learning' which has made her mad!

Look how the lines of the drapery where she sits are beautifully repeated by the dog on her right: how her bent arm is exquisitely balanced by the geometrical figure: how the two lines of her wings are repeated in the ladder: how the objects at her feet make a triangle, whose base is her feet, and

those above her a triangle whose base is her head, and how the rainbow curve reconciles the whole composition, making one harmony so strangely haunting and impressive that we can never forget it.

The dervish takes his drum and beats his monotonous Rhythm to the accompanying words. Then he changes the accent slightly, and beats again, and yet again changes and beats again, and so on, till he induces ecstasy. Nature is the artist's drum and monotonous refrain, and as her Rhythm mounts to his brain it produces ecstasy—a 'lunatic, a lover and a poet is of imagination' all compact. This ecstasy enters into his work, and is reinduced on the spectator if he has eyes to see or ears to hear.

Rhythm begins in pictures if they are so placed on the canvas as to satisfy the eye; then the flowing line is introduced and the feeling is intensified; then the flowing line takes the living never-ending movement of nature, and a great work of art is the result.

It seems to me that, in Rhythm, Greek art is unrivalled anywhere. It has not entered into the heart of man to conceive anything more beautiful in form than the frieze and the pediment on the Parthenon.

Here is form so perfect that we are overwhelmed by it. We are filled with awe and reverence for man's power, which seems almost to transcend nature's. There is nothing in space and time, in the stars and

nature's flowing procession greater than this! We need go no further: man has equalled gods. They come to us from remote time; and time has dared to lay his sacrilegious hand upon them, marring their beauty; but what is the majesty of his rolling years compared with these? His years will pass away: their essence is eternal. By conceiving this eternal beauty, even in a perishable form, man has asserted his sovereignty, and these beautiful works of art remain a marvel for the memory, an astonishment to the intellect!

The mighty procession passes onward in unending continuity, in rhythmic flow, and as they pass, they sing, their steps keeping time to the music, in never-ending circular movement, in flowing, floating line. One sees the wave curve in the horses and chariots, and in the figures of Theseus and Ilissos: the flame form in the beautiful figure of victory, which leaps and sparkles and scintillates as a flame of fire: the curves of the drapery almost taking the flame shape, the exultant poise of the figure seeming to quiver and flap like the flame. Then the beautiful draperies everywhere seem ordered by law, flowing out and coming to a point like the branches in the wind, or falling straight down like the tree trunks.

But there is something in Greek art almost too Godlike to be human: its joy is beyond us, and even its sorrow, as in the three Fates, is too titanic to be on our plane. We turn from it with awe, but almost

with relief to study such pictures as Botticelli's 'Primavera,' or his 'Birth of Venus.'

The 'Primavera' is on a much lower scale than the Parthenon, but its beauty is nearer to us. We can understand its Rhythm without being awed by its immensity. Again the wave form goes through the picture, beginning with Zephyrus on the right, going down the arms of Flora and Spring, carried up to the head of Venus, down and up through the arms of the three Graces and up again in the arm of the figure on the left. Then again the flame form is seen in the three Graces, and the drapery has evidently been studied from the Parthenon, so much does it recall the antique. Movement is all through the picture. The light footsteps hardly seem to touch the ground, and the fragile draperies are gently lifted by the breeze which seems to intercept the fall of the flowers from Flora's lips and hands. The circle behind it gives prominence to the head of Venus, and the dark straight lines of the trees give the pauses in the Rhythm where the eye can rest.

The picture, as the subject suggests, is a joyful one, but its joy is mixed with a pity and a wistfulness which is entirely absent from the Parthenon—still Botticelli is partly Greek.

Turn now to some woodcuts by Holbein—'The Dance of Death.' Here the Rhythm is entirely different: it is sterner, sadder, altogether more human. There is very little use of the flowing line

and the floating curve. The design is austere in the extreme, and where possible, the triangle or straight line is substituted for the curve. Nevertheless the Rhythm is most affecting. It is so full of the sweet sad music of humanity that we all can hear it.

Take 'Death and the Sailors' for instance. The Rhythm here is easily seen. The triangle made by the sail is repeated by the body of the ship. The circles of the waves lead up to where Death is boarding the ship, and are repeated by the mariners above. The scudding sky and sea follow the line of the sails, and the whole is brought together by the slanting mast and rigging. A horror broods over the little design and is intensified by the way all the lines seem to lead up to or come from the figure of Death. Note how differently the flowing lines of sky and sea are treated here. There is no abandonment as in Greek art, even the curves are severe and subdued. All the woodcuts of the Dance of Death are overcharged with feeling and mystery, and are very good examples in which to study Rhythm, as it is in all of them very easily traced and appropriate.

I think if Greek art has a fault, it is want of colour; and this is not because it is statuary, as Rodin's sculpture is glowing with colour. His 'Burghers of Calais' is a wonderful piece of Rhythm, and would have been even more impressive if the figures had been allowed to be placed one after another as he had wished instead of in a group on a platform. They are

all pathetic human beings, while the Greek figures belong to some transcendental world, which is far above us.

Rhythm in poetry and music has the more technical sense of the agreement of time and measure, but there is a great similarity between the arts.

For the flame form in metre, take this :

'The quality of mercy is not strain'd—
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath : it is twice bless'd—
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes :
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown ;
His sceptre shews the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway—
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself ;
And earthly power doth then shew likest God's
When mercy seasons justice.'

For the wave form, take :

'Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough briar,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire.'

In reading that wonderful piece of word-music—the 90th Psalm—one both hears and feels the sea.

'Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from

everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.'

The words carry us onward like the sea. They fall and rise like its waves: they imitate its cadences: the end of the lines give its grand recessional—the backward draw of the retiring wave.

For waving trees, take:

'Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
In a cowslip's bell I lie:
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly,
After summer, merrily.
Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.'

In the first five lines the branches are only swaying gently up and down, up and down; but, at the last two lines, there comes a gust of wind and they are given a good shaking. One can feel in the words how the branches lightly spring and wave, and almost see the delicate fairy form clinging on.

For flowing line and curve, take:

'Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands,
Court'sied when you have and kiss'd.
(The wild waves whist)

Foot it featly here and there;
And, sweet sprites, the burden bear.
Hark, hark!
Bowgh, wowgh.
The watch-dogs bark:
Bowgh, wowgh.
Hark, hark! I hear
The strain of strutting chanticleer
Cry, Cock-a-doodle-doo.'

The words here seem to have magic in them. How exquisitely they give the purity of the morning air, with its faint sea flavour, and the ethereal elfin forms, with their fluttering, floating draperies. One hears the sound of their tiny feet on the dry sand, keeping time to the music; and how beautifully at the end the figures seem to disperse and float away.

Here is a very beautiful word-painting of a lily:

'O lovely lily clean,
O lily, springing green,
O lily, bursting white,
Dear lily of delight!
Spring in my heart again
That I may flower to men!'

'Clean,' 'green,' 'white,' 'delight'—the words are all pure and delicate as the flower, and have its fragile loveliness. The first four lines seem to flow out and spring to a point like the petals. The last two lines—

'Spring in my heart again
That I may flower to men'

give the quiet tender heart of the flower.

Of course I do not mean to suggest that all Rhythm can be traced to a source like the examples I have—perhaps too fancifully—given. Rhythm in most cases is intuitive and comes in many unfamiliar forms. Still, the more one studies, the more one recognises the same mysterious and subtle principle governing all.

MOONLIGHT AT ELIE

We started at midnight to walk along the moonlit shore. The sea was calm, the tide at the full, and not a cloud obscured the stainless clarity of the sky.

On our right, the revolving lamp of the lighthouse sent an intermissive path of liquid gold across the sea. Dim in the distance, three other lights could be discerned: one shining steadily; the other two, now flashing, now blotted out. Poor contrivances of man to imitate the lamp of heaven! They have their day when darkness covers the firmament, but on such a night they seemed superfluous, futile, for yonder, on our left, was the eye of heaven herself—the moon, in all her silvery splendour, unrivalled, wonderful, immaculate. The sea was trembling at her caress, and everywhere she touched him, he threw out sparks of white fire. As the waves broke, these glittering crystals were cast in rich abundance at our feet. Far out to the dim horizon, over the moving mass, they glittered and glowed: they flickered and twinkled, shedding their transient radiance on the unlighted waters around.

We had left the village behind us, and, looking back, we saw the sleeping houses, huddled together

as if for warmth, seeming to shrink from the awful purity of the light in which they were bathed. Most people were abed; but three separate squares of yellow light—one, just lighted as we looked—showed that there were still some watchers left to share with us the silence and the night. How often have I seen these friendly lighted windows and felt a glow of warmth along the heart at the thought of human habitation, of safety, love and rest; but to-night, could we have had our way, we would have gone from room to room, putting out the lights, sending the inmates to slumber, so selfish were we in our anxiety to be alone. The moon, the stars, the sea seemed our unique possession: a treasure none could share. However, no hand drew aside the blind; no face looked out from the window. Our irritation was needless. Whoever they were, they pursued their separate way alone, regardless of us and our dream.

We fell to wondering what each separate light denoted, giving to each a history of our own invention.

The window, in which light had appeared as we looked, we conceived to belong to a mother, wakened from her first sleep by the touch of a childish groping hand, stretched out to her from the adjoining bed, and a little voice saying, 'Mama, I 've had a nightmare! A mouse jumped.' She lit the candle to see him clearer and he had fallen asleep again, a tear

still left upon his golden lashes. She leaves the light, that she may feast her eyes on him, who serves to her for moon and sun.

We had seen that morning in church a beautiful old man. We well remembered the high severity of his features, the stern tenderness of his expression. He had come out of his ordeal with the fine purity of gold tried in the fire; and his clear gaze revealed a chastity the purest virgin never dreamed of. For purity, which has never been touched by grossness, has not the same quality as that which remains pure through all contamination. We liked to think that perhaps the second window was his light, and that he was sitting up late beside the fire, seeing his life pass in the dying embers; and written large thereon the promise to him that overcometh.

We imagined that the third window was a lover's, to whom heaven was opening in the touch of his mistress's hand.

One thing at least seemed certain, that no evil thing could harbour there. Those that love darkness would surely hide their heads on such a night, nor dare to show the faintest candle glimmer which might reveal their presence to the unsullied purity of yonder exalted heaven.

In splendid isolation then we turned our back upon these fellow watchers; and yet who knows but that by different ways we and they were seeking the same goal. The path to heaven is mercifully different to

different people. The mother thinks she has found it in love of her infant; but will the grown man fulfil the promise of the sleeping child? The old man has his satisfaction in having fought the 'good fight and finished his course,' but was there ever victory quite free from the sadness of defeat? The lover enters the holy of holies by a magic touch, but to-day, to-morrow or next year, the magic will vanish, and his golden idol become clay. Our way to 'seek out all perfection' was different from these, and I think surer, for it was the path of beauty; and when did beauty ever fail the heart that craved her!

We stood in silence under the moon to receive the baptism of her holy light. In ecstasy we sank upon the bosom of nature and, all unworthy as we were, she received us into herself. We became one with beauty, eternal, irrational, incomprehensible. And all the while

> 'That sliding silver-shoed,
> Pale silver-proud queen-woman of the sky'

shone down on us. There was no wind, but still beside us the restless sea thundered on the shore in sonorous reminiscence of yesterday's storm. We were drawn into infinite space, and he who set eternity in our heart spake to us intelligible things.

We sat down in a boat on the beach. By daylight this boat is watched by a jealous fisherman, who warns off all intruders, and will not allow the little boys even to touch it. Now the fisherman was

asleep, and we were unmolested, save for the dew which had gathered thick upon the seat. An outspread coat soon removed this obstacle; and here we sat in silence and let the moon and the sea have their will. There was not a secret sin, or unhealed sorrow, which the waves did not wash away, the moon illumine. We, who had been strangers, were received into our father's house: who had been discords, joined the universal harmony. Our blood flowed with the sea. We looked with the eyes of the moon and stars. We listened with the earth and sky. Each little blade of grass was our sister: each tiny grain of sand, our brother. We were partakers in that sacramental service, the mass said for all souls by the moon, the earth, the sea. In that privileged moment, time was no more. We forgot that we were finite beings, 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd.' The infinite pervaded us, and we were fully satisfied.

We climbed the inaccessible wall of heaven. We roamed from star to star. Orion and the Pleiades were ours. Ours the Milky Way and the planets! We explored the mysterious void of space. We penetrated the bowels of the earth and found the 'place for sapphires.' We sank beneath the sea.

> 'The depths closed us round about,
> The weeds were wrapped about our head.'

After I know not how long, we came back to earth again, and found ourselves walking 'upon the beached

verge of the salt flood.' There is a 'time to keep silence and a time to speak.' We spoke of the Greek mottoes: 'Know thyself' and 'Nothing overmuch.' The night had not affected us as a similar one did Matthew Arnold. We could not resolve either to be ourselves, or know ourselves. After such an initiation under the starry sky, embraced by the winds of heaven, bathed in the moonlight, drunk with the rapture of self-forgetfulness, the inexorable Greek motto rang us back like a knell to the prison-house of personality again, the graveyard of our hopes. On such a night, to think of self was painful: to 'know' oneself, impossible! Rather we felt with Macbeth:

> 'To know my deed,
> 'twere best, not know myself.'

We tried the other motto, 'Nothing overmuch,' and it too seemed empty, vain and devoid of meaning. Could we who, but a moment since, were exploring the vastness of space, who had tasted eternity, who had seen with our mortal eyes the absolute beauty, admit limitations!

We crossed to the end of the beach where the sea at high tide washes the feet of the garden walls, and beyond there are low cliffs.

We were only just in time, for the tide had almost reached the walls, and there was but a little strip of rock and seaweed left to find a foothold. On to this we clambered. The wet seaweed and rocks shone

and glittered alternate ebony and diamond. We pursued our perilous way, slipping at every step, to about the middle of the space, where we found the tide, which rises here very quickly, had gained upon us and now barred our passage, lapping right up against the wall. We looked back, only to find our path was cut off there also. 'There was no going hence, nor tarrying here.' Nothing for it, but to take off our stockings and wade. We felt afraid to bare ourselves before the chaste moon. However on looking down into the water, our scruples vanished. Its invitation was clear and insistent. It seemed a privilege scarcely accorded in a lifetime, to put our feet into the undimmed transparency of that cleansing flood. There is a quality in water different from that of any other element. Its texture, its substance, surely there is nothing more beautiful! When it washes over the rock and sand, it does not mingle with them. Its substance is entirely foreign to theirs. It remains different, ethereal, liquid. Painters have not been able to get this quality. In most pictures one can only tell water by the colour. Turner and MacTaggart have caught the freshness of the sea, its sparkle, its grandeur; but they have only rarely been able to give a hint of its liquid quality. This seems to elude any attempts at reproduction, even as the water itself slips through our fingers. The hand fails, but not the heart, and what we love most in water is this elusive property which we cannot express.

In haste we removed our stockings, and then reverently, we stepped into the sea. As we waded to the farther shore, surely

> 'The moving waters at their priestlike task
> Of pure ablution round earth's human shores'

washed us clean every whit.

It was necessary to climb the cliff on the other side. The rocks towered above us, inky black, but of a blackness which was shining and lustrous. The cliffs here are not difficult to climb, and the ascent was easily made; but it took some courage to step into that shadow and actually come in contact with that gloomy substance. As we scrambled up, clinging to the cliff with our hands, we seemed to be touching the very 'stones of darkness and the shadow of death.'

Strained to her dusky bosom, hid by her sullen mantle from the silver moon, the hard earth pressed upon us her sinister secret. The terror of the unknown, the unknowable, invaded us, and insupportable mystery took hold on us.

When we reached the top, the magic of the moonlight had fled: the 'iron had entered into our soul.' Not daring to raise our eyes to the lofty sky, we tried to recover the glamour of our former vision by scanning the ground at our feet. What a carpet this, surely intended for angelic feet. Instead of the well-known green of daylight, the ground was of a

subtle baffling colour: no known tint could be recognised, and yet the whole was steeped in heavenly radiance, and glowed with a quality which the garish colours of day can never hope to emulate. It is not grey: it is not silver. Grey does not glow, nor is silver opalescent. It eludes all attempts at classification, I suppose because it is the colour of spirits. All commonplace daylight objects—grass and flower and bare earth—had become vague and mysterious, and taken to themselves an ethereal beauty.

I said, 'In this, landscape differs from people. How much more beautiful this scene is now than by daylight. We love it more because it has become mysterious. With our friends, it is the opposite. The more we know them, the better we love them.'

He said, 'Do you not forget that all our knowledge of our friends is as it were by moonlight. We see each other as it were 'through a glass darkly' and the mystery only deepens, the nearer we get, although we are not always conscious of this.'

We sat down on a seat which some one had kindly painted white. Our contact with the rocks had left our minds disordered and perplexed, and all attempts to recapture the enchantment of the earlier evening were vain.

As we sat, lost in uneasy thoughts, we became aware that some malign influence outside ourselves was augmenting our disquiet. On looking about, we soon discovered the cause. Beside us and unnoticed at

first was a dark mass, from which the moonbeams seemed to shrink as though they feared to lighten it. On examination it proved to be a German gun, sent as a trophy from a foreign land. No wonder that our hearts, made sensitive to every impression by the melting influence of the night, should have felt instinctively its baleful presence.

There it stood, shorn of its strength, no longer belching fire from its empty mouth, but murder still in its heart. Still it 'smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting.' Unholy passions had raged around it. It had spent its days in blood and violation, the lust of cruelty, and the fierce will to destroy. These savage cursed passions had possessed the men who worked it, and such had been their living fury, that they had even entered into the inanimate substance, penetrating its iron heart, filling its belly with hatred and curses. The detested conqueror had taken away its power to destroy, but not its will. Far from the fatherland, it was forced to be a spectacle to its enemies, an apparently harmless plaything for their children ; but now, at night, when left alone, it returned to its true character, vomiting its odious spleen upon the innocent air, filling the place around with the concentrated venom of its evil heart. Did the spirits of the German gunners come back to it at night ? Or had they, perhaps purified in another sphere, left their vile passions to inhabit this their handiwork ?

Like the scapegoat in the land not inhabited, did it bear upon itself all their iniquities ? Anyway, this sombre sharer in our solitude impressed upon us, that our former contention had been wrong, and that things evil could remain rampant, nor hide their heads even in the stainless purity of such a night.

We turned our backs upon the spectre with relief and sadly began our homeward journey. Our adventures were not yet ended, for, while crossing the edge of the golf links, we came upon an extraordinary object. Its dark bulk lay along the ground ; its head was raised ; and from each side large ears protruded. The whole aspect was weird and threatening. After our experience with the gun, we decided this could be none other than Satan himself ' seeking whom he might devour.' With beating heart, we approached him cautiously. He never moved, but lay there regarding us. We came nearer still and found that the devil resolved himself into a rude wooden cross, which cast its shadow on some six feet of bare ground, where the grass would not grow.

' A suicide's grave ' suggested my companion. I thought it was more probably the last resting-place of some poor castaway, hastily buried by the shore, where he was found. If indeed this lonely grave contained the bones of some poor sailorman, surely after ' life's fitful fever ' he would here ' sleep well ' with the sea to sing his lullaby and the night air so sweet about him.

'Let us go back by the village,' said my companion, and indeed we had need of human society. There was not a light now to be seen, but the clustered houses welcomed us with their homely faces, and the moonlight steeped them in a calm which allayed our fears. As our footsteps rang along the quiet streets, our thoughts again became calm and pellucid. The village clock struck one. We had just been out an hour. We entered the house and closed the door, shutting out the heavenly radiance. Going to bed I noticed a cloud of smoke ascending by my window. I leant out into the moonlight and was greeted by the unmistakable fumes of tobacco. On the window sill below was a large cat, grey by daylight but now looking yellow and unfamiliar. He blinked at me, stretched himself, and flopped into the room below. I put out the light and joined the sleepers. Still the moon, 'though unbeheld in deep of night,' shone on.

ELIZABETH

The door closed upon Elizabeth and she was alone in the quiet street. She walked quickly away, too intent on the recent disturbing interview to notice anything outside her own uneasy thoughts. Nature, for once in sympathetic mood, surrounded her unheeded. The air hung limp and heavy, with a touch of frost in it, slightly dim but not opaque. The tall houses stood against a silvery sky. In soft clear tones, in finest shades of colour they descended, blending with the pavement and the roadway. Grey was the predominant note, the theme of the piece: tender grey pervading all, making a poem of the commonplace.

Elizabeth took a car to the terminus and sat, unconscious of the noisy life around her, dead to everything except these words which kept repeating themselves again and again in her brain: 'An operation will be necessary.'

She was trying to think what this meant to her: to adjust her attitude towards a new situation. Elizabeth was a great upholder of her own sex—in principle, if not always in practice—so she had determined to consult a lady doctor, if one could be found in whom she could have implicit trust. In

this she had succeeded beyond her expectations. The lady surgeon whom she had just left had exactly the ideal qualities of a lady doctor :

> 'All that sternness amid charm,
> All that sweetness amid strength'

of which Elizabeth, being herself weak, felt the need. Yet this lady had spoken calmly, even cheerfully, of a thing that appeared to Elizabeth the end of all things. Elizabeth was about 'as valiant as the virgin in the night,' and she had a passionate love of life.

The car stopped. She alighted and began her homeward walk along the country road. It was three o'clock in the afternoon and the wintry light was already beginning to fail. The air had grown damp and chilly, and a few large flakes of snow were falling slowly, persistently, like big teardrops on the face of nature. As they fell, they melted, each succeeded by another, falling, melting, falling, melting, and falling again, touching the dreaming landscape in tender mystic caress. The afternoon had not lost its sweetness : the snowflakes only added a touch more of sadness to the general wistful amenity. Across the scene, the canal stretched, a track of silver, with sad brown trees silhouetted on either bank. Further away, the darker outlines of the hills were blurred by the mist against the sky. Where the hills stopped, the town began, with its chimneys, spires and pinnacles, and its dim grey houses. Sparks from the

funnel of a passing train made a splash of vivid colour in contrast to the general subdued tones. The noise of the train jarred upon the inoffensive quiet of the landscape.

A flake of snow touched Elizabeth's cheek and awakened her from disagreeable preoccupations. She was thinking of a familiar quotation (which had come to her with a new and startling significance)—

> 'Between the acting of a dreadful thing
> And the first motion, all the interim is
> Like a phantasma or a hideous dream:
> The genius and the mortal instruments
> Are then in council, and the state of man
> Like to a little kingdom suffers then
> The nature of an insurrection.'

The gentle touch of the snowflake recalled her to the world outside herself. Her eyes travelled over the view, the silver canal, the delicate purple and brown of the trees, the soft green fields, to the blurred outline of the distant hills and there rested satisfied. The tender colouring soothed and calmed her, and a great peace settled upon her anxious soul. Close by the roadside was a ploughed field and the newly turned sods were sweet. A little farther on, she leant against a stone dyke that separated the road from a field of grass, and drank in the subdued and tranquil colour of the ground. These were not the green pastures of summer, but this delicate faded grass had a more ethereal beauty.

As the daylight failed, the evening changed its character. The ineffable peace became a wistful longing, investing each common object with inexpressible pathos. She forgot her trouble. She was possessed with a desire for something much more important than length of days or human happiness. It was an impersonal aspiration. She wanted what the wind was seeking, as he sighed past her: what the trees desired, as they stretched their hands up to heaven: what the patient earth was waiting for, in reverie: something unknowable, beyond, spiritual, eternal. Compared with this passionate craving which filled her, her own fate seemed a matter of very little importance.

In this exalted frame of mind, she reached home. The children were playing at hide-and-seek in the twilight round the house. The sight of them brought Elizabeth back to earth, and a whimsical story once told her by a friend came into her mind. The lady had had pneumonia so badly that her life was despaired of. The doctor had pronounced the case hopeless. The nurses were already tiptoeing round the bed, speaking in whispers. She herself lay floating on the borderland between life and death. Suddenly, there came into her head a distinct vision of her two little girls dressed in black frocks made by her sister-in-law. Her soul, which had been sinking into oblivion, was stirred with violent revolt. 'I cannot endure it,' she cried. The will to live came

back to her, and from that moment she began to amend. She came back from the gates of death, not from love of life, not from devotion to her dear ones, but from the purely æsthetic reason that she hated badly-made and ill-fitting frocks.

Elizabeth did not know why she thought of this story now. It was quite irrelevant. Elizabeth's sister-in-law was not in the least likely to make garments for her children, and if she did they would be well made : whereas Elizabeth could not even hem a duster !

She went into the house and found her husband waiting anxiously for news. Having told him, and feeling she must occupy herself, she went down to the morning-room to choose books to take to the nursing home. Her eyes strayed over poetry books, but they, none of them, looked inviting. At last she selected from her Shakespeare, *King Lear* and *Richard the Second* perhaps from a dim subconscious feeling that they, having both lost their crowns, had suffered some species of mutilation and therefore might prove sympathetic.

This was Thursday and the day fixed for entering the nursing home was the following Monday. The interim had to be got over somehow. Elizabeth's courage kept up wonderfully for the first evening, and after that dissolved altogether. Kind lady friends took the opportunity of telling her all the unpleasant tales which are current everywhere about

nursing homes: tales of unfortunate patients left for hours with heavy trays reposing on their chests, of food placed just out of reach of disabled arms, of unanswered bells, of callous nurses, and intentional neglect. One friend finished her rehearsal by saying, 'I wonder anybody comes out of a nursing home alive.' The result of this was that by the time Monday came, Elizabeth regarded the nursing home in much the same way as an early Christian looked upon the arena, or a later Protestant on the Holy Inquisition!

As she was not a person who kept anything to herself, the waiting came really hardest on her husband. Oppressed with anxiety himself, he must never show it, as he had the double burden of keeping up her spirits and his own. However, long training in the difficult *métier* of being Elizabeth's husband had made him strong in endurance! He fortunately was possessed of the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job, and he never once reproached her for making his nights hideous and his days intolerable by lamentations.

At length the last night came. When Elizabeth was putting the little girl to bed, the child said to her, in a comfortable sleepy tone, 'Mama, I hope you won't die, but you might, you know, and if you do, I will never forget you.'

She went to her son hoping for comfort. He was lying in bed with his eyes wide open. He said,

'Mama, people sometimes never waken again after chloroform. What will happen if you don't ?'

Poor Elizabeth ! How much we need our children, and how little they need us !

The last day arrived and she found herself resigned to fate. The packing was done—there was only the taxi to wait for and the children to say good-bye to. The taxi was late. Her husband went to the gate to look for it. She stayed at the window with the little boy. The garden was dark, but the melancholy waving branches of the trees stood out plainly against the lights of the village and the starlit sky. A little distance off, across some fields, a traction engine was lumbering along the road. She could indistinctly see its dark bulk and the evening air was filled with the noise of its heavy progress. In the light of the window, a little bit of white paper moved aimlessly about upon the path, stirred by the wind which moaned over the garden like a disembodied spirit, whispering disquiet. The sadness of the scene weighed upon Elizabeth's already burdened spirit.

The taxi arrived and the journey began. Hardly a word was spoken till they reached their destination—a tall, grim house in a block. As Elizabeth stepped from the motor on to the pavement, she was conscious of a strong feeling of resentment towards the architect who had built these houses. He had succeeded in making them handsome, dignified and imposing, but had done his best to eliminate all cheerfulness from

his work. As Elizabeth shivered on the doorstep, she felt that over the door should have been written, 'All hope abandon, ye who enter here.'

A trim nurse appeared at their summons, and they found themselves in a bare and lofty hall, with a staircase at the far end, having rubber mats on each step. The house had been a private residence, but had been converted into a nursing home—Elizabeth supposed because the owner could no longer endure its depressing atmosphere!

They followed the nurse up long flights of grey steps to a bedroom on the second floor. The room was small but very lofty, and as the roof was grey and the electric light shaded, when they looked up to the ceiling, they seemed to lose themselves in infinite space. Among Elizabeth's many relations, there had been the Wisest Aunt, whose favourite maxims were, 'Nothing is ugly but wickedness,' and 'Hate nothing but the devil.' The seed of this good lady's excellent advice had unfortunately fallen on stony ground in the heart of her niece, for Elizabeth found many things ugly which were not wicked, and hated many things which were not the devil. Among these latter, she had a special aversion to high roofs. She knew 'the spacious firmament on high' was good to look upon, but she liked a roof to nestle comfortably close to her head. She would have revelled in a box-bed, for then both walls and roof would have effectually shut out the unknown.

As a girl she always pushed the bed against the wall if possible, and lay all night facing its friendly shelter, never daring to turn to the mysterious room behind her. This predilection had to be given up for the sake of stained floors and carpets, but she still felt relieved when, by good fortune, she found a bed in her favourite place.

The height of the roof was the first thing Elizabeth had noticed. She now took in further details of the room with a sinking heart.

There was no furniture except what was absolutely necessary. The walls were bare and grey, the floor was covered with linoleum of a dim brown shade. At the far end was an electric stove. The whole effect was professional and chilling. Even the smallest bit of bright colour would have been welcome, but there was none.

Elizabeth glanced at the bed and shivered. Not only was it standing right out into the middle of the room, so that there was no refuge on either side, but on it lay a quilt of some nondescript grey stuff trimmed with broad bands of black satin. How Elizabeth wished that Sister Anne, the head of the home, had been a 'virtuous woman,' and clothed her quilts in scarlet: for the famous Biblical lady, in Elizabeth's opinion, owed her reputation to the colour in which she clothed her household! It was not only for fear of the snow that she chose scarlet. The 'many daughters' had sought out wool and flax, had got

their meat from far, had risen while it was yet night, and done all the other praiseworthy things mentioned in the text; but, when it came to clothing their households, Elizabeth felt sure they had chosen brown or black, and so this lady had rightly 'excelled them all'—'Let her own works praise her in the gate.'

Elizabeth and her husband sat down in this cheerless room and gazed at each other. There was no more to say, nothing to do, now, but part! Presently he had gone, and she was left entirely alone.

The nurse brought her supper. There seemed to be endless nurses, but as yet they had no individuality! To her, they were nurses, not women! A feeling of indifference settled upon her. She no longer cared what happened. She took up a novel and began to read, and continued far into the night. It was a book in which impossible things happen to impossible people, full of murders and suicides and hairbreadth escapes. Under ordinary circumstances, Elizabeth would never have thought of reading such a book. She was one of those unfortunate people who cannot read a novel; but to-night she understood how this kind of book can be a friend to man.

Elizabeth came into the home on Monday evening, and the operation was fixed for Wednesday morning at half-past eight. She got through the next day in a kind of dream. She was no longer worried or afraid. She had simply ceased to think. The nurses

were, contrary to expectation, kind and attentive; but she hardly noticed them. They all made the same remark, that she would be glad when Wednesday was over. She was allowed no food, but she did not miss it.

Wednesday morning came, and the nurse to waken her. She had slept quite peacefully. Then everything happened in a rush. The surgeon appeared, and the anæsthetist in white overalls. The latter felt her pulse and sounded her heart. They injected something into her arm, and told her it was time to come to the theatre. The dreaded hour had come and she did not care! She walked calmly to the operating room and was helped on to the table. Some one adjusted a pillow under her head. She could not afterwards have told what the room was like. The only thing she noticed was a prevailing whiteness, and a small electric light high up in the roof. On this she fixed her eyes as she inhaled the chloroform. Then a delicious sense of relief and peace stole upon her. She seemed to be floating up above the table. The faces of the surgeon and the nurses were blurred by a grey mist composed of tiny particles all moving, but she still saw the electric light. The feeling of ease and assuagement broadened and deepened, rose to beatitude, and she floated out into the unknown.

The next thing Elizabeth knew was that some one was speaking.

The voice sounded strangely like her own, but it had a curious inflection, quite toneless. The voice complained of a pain. Elizabeth somehow knew about that pain, and that it was very bad, but the voice irritated her, distracting her attention from something sweet and strange, with which she desired to be wholly occupied, and she sank back into forgetfulness.

Then she became conscious of struggling with hands which held her down, and a different voice said, 'I have great difficulty in keeping her in bed.' She opened her eyes and saw the faces of two nurses in the moving mist. One bent over her, and asked, 'How are you feeling?' and the first voice, which seemed like and yet unlike her own, said something about morphia and a dreadful pain. The other voice replied, 'The surgeon gave morphia just before she left. I do not think she can have more.'

Then followed a confused period of time, in which Elizabeth seemed to float up high into a closed compartment, in which was an electric light and a pain, all surrounded by quivering mist. She was distinctly conscious of the pain. It annoyed and vexed her, and yet it did not seem to belong to her, but to have an entity of its own. It had got somehow so mixed up with the electric light, that she did not know whether the pain was the electric light, or the electric light the pain, or if they were one and the same thing. Sometimes she would sink down into the room again,

and be dimly aware of the bed, the grey walls and the nurses' faces : but at these times she took the pain with her. It lost its separate entity and became her pain.

About five o'clock she saw her husband by the bedside. He was saying, 'How are you, dear?' She replied, 'I have a dreadful pain,' and the nurse came and injected something into her arm. Then Elizabeth fled up again into the misty compartment, and the pain separated from her and joined the electric light.

It was not till late at night that she entirely regained consciousness. She was much surprised to find that the knowledge that the operation was over gave her no satisfaction. She could think of nothing but the state of discomfort and pain in which she found herself, compared to which the operation seemed a mere bagatelle. She had never visualised this beforehand, but had thought that when the operation was over, she would be so thankful to be alive, nothing else would matter. Now, she did not care whether she lived or died.

The night nurse proved a ministering angel, and came constantly in the whole night through, with cheering words and soothing presence. The very sight of her was grateful to a sufferer. She had beautiful white teeth, a pure complexion, and, 'that most excellent thing in woman,' a low voice.

As Elizabeth lay awake on her uneasy pillow, she thought of the magnitude of human suffering. She thought of the quiet comforting night, with its gift of sleep 'which knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,' for the multitudes of tired people whom it favours; of the sea-bird coming home to roost in the rocky cliff; of the baby in its cradle; of the prisoner 'who hears not the voice of the oppressor'; of the exile, dreaming of home.

Then she thought of those who 'watch for the morning,' and to whom sleep does not come. How trifling was her own pain, compared to the enormous sum of misery which was going on under those quiet watchful stars. A sentence from the Shorter Catechism kept recurring to her mind:

'And so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of Hell forever.'

How thorough-going those old Calvinists were! There was no false sentiment about them. They did not mince matters. They even seemed to take a grim delight in the stern completeness of their creed. The humour of it struck Elizabeth—surely the 'miseries of this life' were enough!

She could see the furniture indistinctly in the room, and the silhouette of the window quite clearly. How late the street lamps were kept lit. . . . Certainly it was getting lighter. . . . A silvery ray crept in and lighted up the foot of the bed: then she remembered

it was full moon ! In a little while, the rumble of cart-wheels began. The city was awakening. The night was over. At six o'clock, the nurse brought tea.

For several days the outside world did not exist for her. She thought of nothing but her own sufferings. Her little son came to see her and she hardly noticed him. . . . Gradually, she began to amend. Kind friends sent flowers and made the bare room gay. They were placed on a table across the foot of the bed. For hours she lay admiring their exquisite freshness and fragility against the grey walls, and the iridescent high lights on the glass vases. One day her tray was brought by the prettiest nurse in a red dress which made an exquisite harmony with the wall. This nurse had often been in before, and Elizabeth had hardly looked at her. Now, she seemed to see her for the first time. With returning health, she was reawakening to the delights of artistic perception. By this time, she had realised that nursing homes are not so black as they are painted. The nurses, who were all kind and attentive, were beginning to lose their professional air and become individuals. The whole atmosphere of the place was peaceful and undisturbing. Outside worries were not allowed to intrude. Mentally, she was having a complete rest and change.

For five days Elizabeth was kept entirely on liquids, tea and a little Bovril. She felt as if she

would never wish to eat again. She had no feeling of hunger. On the sixth day, when the nurse brought her a tiny bit of bread and butter, Elizabeth looked at it very doubtfully, and the nurse had to use some persuasion to induce her to try it. With the first bite, Elizabeth experienced an entirely new and delightful sensation—the joy of eating! Never had she tasted anything so agreeable as that bread and butter. It added a new zest to life! She thought of nothing else till eleven, when they brought her coffee and a biscuit, which proved equally palatable. There began a period of looking forward from meal to meal, with the keenest enjoyment. 'But beauty vanishes, beauty passes, however rare, rare, it be,' and this epicurean delight of the convalescent soon wore off! There came a time when Elizabeth could no longer look upon her daily bread through rose-coloured spectacles. Though she still regarded it with respect and esteem, the enthusiasm had gone. Yet nothing is wholly lost which gives us insight into the feelings of others and true sympathy with them. She remembered the type of person she had seen in restaurants, always alone, generally inclined to obesity, tucking table-napkins comfortably under their chins, and ordering endless dinners, which they attacked with zest and masticated with fervour. Formerly these people had filled Elizabeth with disgust: now she understood their feelings and was secretly jealous. Never after her experience at the

home did she see these veterans of the table without her heart expanding with sympathy and sadness: sympathy with them, and sadness for herself that she had lost the art of eating—for she did lose it eventually, though not while she remained in the home.

As Elizabeth got better, visitors came, and she began to take an interest in the life of the place. Life in a nursing home has its own character, almost conventual. The regularity and monotony are soothing to tired nerves, and the calm faces of the nurses testify to the fact that doing appointed tasks at regular intervals suits the human organism, and is good for the healthy as well as the sick. In this quiet life, there are only two events—the visits of the surgeons, and the operations. Days when operations are performed are red-letter days at a home!

Elizabeth used to notice the rapt expression on the nurses' faces, when they came to her after being present at an operation. She often asked them how they could endure it, and they invariably replied, that they enjoyed it exceedingly. Evidently they did, for there was nothing these curious people more loved to talk about! With great gusto, they gave Elizabeth all sorts of gruesome details about their profession, so that she felt on quite familiar terms with 'appendixes,' 'tumours,' and the rest.

As she had nothing better to do, she tried to puzzle out the reason of their enjoyment of a thing which

appeared so repellent to the ordinary person. She came to the conclusion that it was because they forgot about themselves. She remembered that the poet composing great verses : the drunkard looking upon the wine ' when it is red,' letting it slide down his throat and pervade his being and with

> ' Its sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart '

are each forgetful of self. And so she thought are the nurses and surgeons at an operation. She understood the fascination an operation possesses for them, when she remembered that they are for the time being so absorbed in what is in front of them that ' The two eternal notes of I and thou ' cease to trouble, and they have forgotten about themselves. Matter hates mind, she reflected, and when we project our minds on something outside ourselves, our bodies have a rest from the tyranny of an alien intellect : hence the feeling of exhilaration which follows !

Elizabeth was now allowed to get up for the first time. She felt terribly weak, but cheerful ; and after that, the time flew till the day came when she was to leave the home. Her good-bye was said quite regretfully to the little room which she had entered with such gloomy forebodings, and to the kind nurses, whom she had at first regarded with such suspicion.

Once in the taxi and on the way home, the whole episode appeared like a dream. 'Lord, what fools we mortals be,' she thought, as she remembered all her fear and shrinking. It had passed 'as a dream when one awaketh,' and she was alive. There was a lovely sunset; Spring was in the air; and she was going home a new creature.

'For the grave cannot praise thee. Death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee.'

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